Talks to Children about Jesus

Miss Louise Hannibal
given by her mother.

Passed from this life,
on April 3, 1932.

"Gone, but not forgotten."
"By her Daughter
Elsie."
1932.

Engraved by R. Hoskin. *From the painting by B. Blockhorst*

"SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN TO COME UNTO ME."

TALKS TO CHILDREN

ABOUT

JESUS.

BY

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PREFACE.

Of the many books which have been written specially for children, to tell the wonderful story of our Redeemer's Life on Earth, those for the little ones are strangely incomplete; whilst others, suited for more advanced intellects, are beyond the comprehension of the very young.

In the following pages, therefore, my endeavor has been to give the Gospel Story almost in full; yet in such simple language as to be readily understood by a child of four—or even less.

This little work is not didactic. It has been my aim rather to let the *Story of Jesus* tell its own exquisite tale; believing that it possesses, in this, its simplest form, a peculiar fascination for the young mind.

I would wish to acknowledge the great assistance I have derived in my work from that most useful and suggestive book (invaluable to the Sunday-school teacher), *Lessons on the Life of our Lord*, by Eugene Stock.

Farrar's *Life of Christ* has also helped me much in telling my story to the little ones.

H. M.

THE ANNUNCIATION.

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MAP OF
PALESTINE
in the
TIME OF CHRIST
Scale of Miles.
0 10 20 30
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
ARABIA PETRÆA
ED-OM
MOAB
PERÆA
GILEAD
DECAPOLIS
ITUREA
TRACHONITIS
AURANITIS
GALILEE
SAMARIA
JUDEA
DEAD SEA
WILDERNESS OF JUDEA
Sidon
Sarepta
Tyrus
Acre
C. Carmel
Caesarea
Joppa
Azotus
Gaza
Besor R.
Gerar
Beersheba
Eschol R.
Hebron
Engedi
Carmel
Masada
Sodom
Kir Moab
R. Arnon
Machaerus
MT. NEBO
Bethlehem
Etham
Tekoah
Zorah
Bethany
JERUSALEM
MT. OF OLIVES
Mizpah
Gibeah
Ramah
Jericho
Bethel
Beth-horon
Lydda
Arimathea
Ramleh
Emmaus
Antipatris
Gilgal
Shiloh
MT. GERIZIM
Sychar
Jacob's Well
MT. EBAL
Samaria
Shunem
Bethshean
MT. GILBOA
Nain
MT. TABOR
Nazareth
Cana
Capernaum
Magdala
Tiberias
Hazor
Chorazin ?
Bethsaida
Gergesa
Dalmanutha
Gamala
Gadara
Pella
Jabesh Gilead
Bethabara
Gerasa
MT. GILEAD
Ramoth Gilead
Edrei
Damascus
R. Abana
R. Pharpar
MT. HERMON
Cæsarea-Philippi
L. PHIALA
Dan or Laish
MEROM
R. Hasbeiya
R. Jordan
R. Kishon
MT. CARMEL
PLAIN OF ESDRAELON
TIBERIA OR CALILEE
R. Jabbok
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35
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TALKS TO CHILDREN ABOUT JESUS.

CHAPTER I.

WHY JESUS CAME.

THERE is no story that has ever been written that is so beautiful or so wonderful as the story about Jesus.

He was like nobody else that ever lived; and His life was one of perfect holiness. Other people, even the best, are naughty sometimes; He never was. Others are selfish; but Jesus never pleased Himself. Others are unkind sometimes; but the heart of Jesus was always full of love, and pity, and gentleness.

But though, as I have said, He never once did a wrong thing, or had a sinful thought, yet He suffered more sorrow than any one else upon earth, and though He was always doing good and was always kind, yet wicked people hated Him, and treated Him with dreadful cruelty, and at last killed Him.

I am sure your hearts will ache when you hear how it all happened.

This wonderful story is one of which nobody tires.

Little children, clever people, old men and women, all love to hear over and over again the "sweet story of old," which tells them about Jesus.

But who was He? who *is* He?

The Lord from heaven. He is Himself God, and He is God's own beloved Son, who from everlasting has been always with the Father, and who, with Him, made this beautiful world, and all that is in it.

Do you not wonder that He should have left His heavenly Father's throne to come down to this wicked, cruel world? Perhaps you think He did not know what would happen?

Ah! dear children, the strange thing is that He did know it all! and yet He came! It was for love of us—for love of you and me—for love, too, even of those wicked people who hated Him, that He put aside His glory and came to suffer, bleed, and die. And He was "*content* to do it." Does not this show how *much* He loved us? How much we ought to love Him?

Do you think God was willing to spare His well-beloved Son?

Yes, He was; but if the Bible had not told us so, we never could have believed it. But the Bible is God's own book; and so we know it is *quite* true that God was not only willing to let His dear Son come, but He *wished* Him to do it. He *sent* Him.

Is not this wonderful?

There is a verse in the Bible that tells us, "God is love;" and does not this prove it?

But now I must try and explain to you why it was necessary that Jesus should come to our earth, and take our nature upon Him (that means, to be made like one of us). And first I will begin by asking you a question.

Where do you hope to go when you die?

You will say, "To heaven."

But do you not know that nothing can enter heaven but what is perfectly holy and perfectly good? And are *you* holy?

You *know* you are not. You know you have often naughty, angry tempers; that you are often disobedient; that sometimes you are tempted to say what is not true, and to be unkind. Then, are you fit for heaven?

You *know* you are not; neither is any living person. God looked down from His dwelling-place to see if there were any that were really good and without sin, but he found *not one!* So we must all have been punished for our wrong-doing, and at last must have gone to hell, that dreadful place prepared for the devil and his angels, if God had not found out a way to save us.

He promised that one day He would send His Son the Lord Jesus Christ to be a man on earth. And He would be unlike any other man that ever lived, because he would be *always* good, and would

do God's will on earth, as perfectly as it is done in heaven.

And He was to do much more than this. He was to bear our sins upon Himself, and God was to punish *Him* for *our* wickedness. At last He was to *die* for us, and God promised to accept *that* as sufficient to wash away all sin, and to make the whole world holy.

As the little hymn says:—

> "He knew how wicked men had been,
> And knew that God *must* punish sin,
> So out of pity Jesus said
> He'd bear the punishment instead."

Yet there is something left for us to do, remember! We must believe on the Lord Jesus, and we must love Him, and try to be like Him, and to do His holy will. And when we find that we have done naughty things, and have fallen into sin (for Satan is always trying to make us wicked), if we are sorry, and pray to God to forgive us and to help us, He will always do it, if we ask it for Jesus Christ's sake.

And so, for His name's sake, He will take us to heaven when we die.

Now can you understand a little why Jesus came?

He came to do what only God can do (for remember that Jesus is God).

He came to take away sin.

He came to give us everlasting life.

CHAPTER II.

THE VIRGIN MARY.

AFTER people had waited a long, long time for the promised Saviour, God saw that the right time had come to send His beloved Son down from heaven.

And how do you think He came? Like a great king, with servants to wait upon Him, and to obey Him?

Oh, no! Though He was a king in heaven, and though all the bright angels obeyed Him there, and sang praises to Him, yet when He came into this world, He put away all His greatness and glory, and chose to come like a little helpless baby.

This is how it happened.

There was a poor woman at that time whose name was Mary, and she lived in a small town called Nazareth. I am quite sure she was a good woman, and loved God, and always tried to do what would please Him.

One day she was alone in the house, when all at once she saw a bright angel before her. God had sent the angel to speak to her. When she saw him she was very much frightened, but the angel spoke to her so kindly. He said,

"Do not be afraid, Mary; for God is pleased with

VIRGIN AND CHILD.

you, and He has sent me to tell you a wonderful thing. He will give you a little baby, and you must call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins."

Then Mary said to the angel, "How shall this be?"

And the angel said, "God can do everything. He will send His Holy Spirit upon you, and so the holy babe that He will send you shall be called the Son of God."

How Mary must have wondered at that strange message! Did she believe it?

Yes: she answered, "I am God's servant; let it be to me as you have said."

And then, when the angel had gone back to heaven, she praised God for His goodness, and for doing such great things to her. She said, "My spirit rejoices in God my Saviour!"

You see she called her baby her Saviour, because she knew quite well that He would save her, as well as every one else who trusts Him, from sin and from Satan.

Mary had a husband called Joseph. He was a good man. And God sent an angel to *him* one night, to speak to him in a dream, as he lay fast asleep upon his bed, and to tell him about the baby Jesus that would soon be born.

CHAPTER III.

THE BIRTH OF JESUS.

NOW it came to pass in those days that a great king gave an order that every one was to have his name written down in a long roll or book, that he might know how many people there were. And both Joseph and Mary, like every one else, were obliged to obey the king's order.

It was the cold winter time when they left their home in Nazareth to set out on their journey to another town called Bethlehem. It must have taken them a long time to go so far, for it was a very great way off.

When they got to Bethlehem, they found that so many people had gone there too, to have their names written down, that every place was full, and there was no room for them in the inn. What were they to do?

Near by there was a place where camels, cows, and asses were kept; and there Joseph and Mary were obliged to go and rest, after their long, cold, weary journey.

While they were there, lodging in the stable, God sent to Mary the little baby He had promised her.

How happy she was now! She wrapped the precious babe so tenderly in long swaddling-clothes,

SHE LAID HIM IN A MANGER.

and laid Him down carefully in a manger, on the soft hay. She had no pretty cradle to put Him into. Though He was God's own Son, He was born in a stable, and His bed was a manger. You know, a manger is the place in the stable where food is put for the cattle to eat.

Did any one know that this little baby was the Son of God, come down into the world?

Joseph and Mary knew, but no one else just at first. Very soon, however, God sent to tell some other people.

The very same night that Jesus was born, some shepherds were in the fields near Bethlehem. What were they doing there, in the dark and cold? Why were they not in their own homes?

They were taking care of their sheep, and watching to see that no savage animal should hurt them. Here where *we* live, sheep and cattle may remain quite safely out in the fields all night; but in that country, far away, there are a great many bears and wolves, and they would kill the sheep if men did not stay with them to frighten the wild beasts away.

Well! the shepherds were watching over their flocks that night, when suddenly an angel came to them, and a bright light—brighter than the sun—shone all around them; and the poor shepherds were sore afraid.

But the angel spoke so gently to them. "Do not be afraid," he said; "for I bring you such good news,

SHEPHERDS WATCHING THEIR FLOCKS BY NIGHT.

which will make you and all people very glad. A little baby is born this day, who is your Saviour, Christ the Lord. Go to Bethlehem, and you will find him wrapped in swaddling-clothes, and lying in a manger."

As the angel said this, all at once a very great number of angels came from heaven, and they all praised God and said, "Glory be to God, and peace be to men."

When the angels had sung their song, they all went away again back to heaven. And as soon as they had gone, the shepherds said to each other, "Let us go quickly to Bethlehem, and see this wonderful thing that has come to pass, that God has told us of."

They made such haste to go! As they hurried along, they did not think of their flocks any more; they only thought of the infant Saviour, and that the Son of God had come into the world.

Do you not think they must have longed to see Him? Oh, yes; and at last they found Him, lying in the manger, just as the angel had said; and Mary and Joseph were quite near, taking care of Him.

The shepherds then told everybody of the wonderful sight they had seen, and how God's angel had come to tell them where to find the holy child Jesus, and that He was the Son of God.

As the people listened to the shepherds' story, they were very much surprised; yet they did not

believe that the little baby lying in the manger was indeed the Saviour of the world.

But the *shepherds* believed it; and when they went back to the fields again, to take care of their

BETHLEHEM.

sheep, they thanked and praised God for all the wonderful things they had heard and seen.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE.

THE baby Jesus was just six weeks old when His mother and Joseph carried Him to Jerusalem, to present Him to God in the Temple.

The Temple was God's house; and Mary wanted to take her baby there, and to thank God, in His house, for all His goodness to her.

So the beloved Son was brought into His Father's house, to receive His Father's blessing. The priest who took the child in his arms to present Him before God, did not know who this baby was! He thought He was just like any other little baby.

Just then an old man, called Simeon, came into the Temple. He was a very good man, and loved to pray to God. He knew that God was going to send His Son into the world, and he wanted so much to see the Lord with his own eyes. God had told him that he should not die till he had seen Jesus Christ, and he believed God.

It was the Holy Spirit that made Simeon go into the Temple at that moment; and what did he see there?

He only saw a poor man and woman with a little baby! Yet he felt God's message in his heart saying to him, "This is the promised Saviour;" and at once, with a heart full of love and thankfulness, he took the holy babe in his arms, and sang a song of joy and praise to God for sending Jesus.

How Joseph and Mary wondered when they found that this stranger knew who their baby was!

Then good old Simeon blessed them both. But he told Mary that though Jesus was the Saviour, yet people would speak against Him, and would not

PRESENTING THE FIRST BORN IN THE TEMPLE.

believe in Him. He also told her that one day she would have such a great sorrow that it would be like a sword piercing her heart.

When did she feel like that?

Ah! I am sure you know! It was when she saw her dear Son hanging on the cross.

But how did Simeon know what was going to be done to Jesus?

God told him by His Holy Spirit. Those people to whom God speaks, and tells them what He is going to do, are called prophets.

Just as Simeon had done speaking, a very old woman came into the Temple. You have never seen any one so old as she was: she was more than a hundred years of age. Her name was Anna, and she was a prophetess, She loved God so much, that day and night she used to pray to Him, and serve Him.

As soon as she had seen the baby in His mother's arms, she believed that He was the Lord, and she thanked God, and spoke about Him to all those who were longing for the Saviour to come into the world.

After all these things, Joseph and Mary took the holy babe back to Bethlehem.

And the child grew. Not only His little limbs grew bigger and stronger, but He grew in wisdom and perfect holiness. The Bible says He was "filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him."

Think of Him, dear children, and try to be like Him. Remember, He was quite holy, without one

JEWISH HIGH PRIEST.

spot or stain of sin. As a tiny baby, He was never even cross.

Will you try to be like Jesus? a child of God?

CHAPTER V.

THE WISE MEN.

IN a country far, far away from Bethlehem, there lived some wise, rich men. They were very clever and very learned. They liked to watch the stars, and they knew a great deal about them.

One night they saw a new star! It was very bright and very beautiful; and they knew that God had put this star in the sky, to tell them that He had sent His Son into the world to be a little baby.

The wise men thought they would like so much to see the Lord Jesus, and so they said they would go and try and find Him. They said.

"Let us go and worship Him, for He is God's Son; and let us take Him some presents, for He is a king."

What does it mean to worship? When we pray to God, and give Him thanks, and praise Him, then we worship Him; and the wise men knew that Jesus was God, and so they wanted to worship Him, though He was only a little baby.

So the wise men took some gold and other things, and then they mounted their camels and set off on their long, long journey.

At last they came to Jerusalem. When the people saw these strangers from a strange country,

they wondered what they had come for. But they soon knew, for the wise men began at once to ask,

"Where is the baby King that is just born? For we have seen His star, and are come to worship Him."

The people said, "We do not know of any baby King."

How surprised the wise men were to hear this! What were they to do now? Good old Simeon and Anna could have told them about Jesus, but they did not know the wise men were seeking Him. Would these men give up trying to find Him, and go back to their own country again? No, they left Jerusalem at once, to go further on. And lo! once again they saw the star! When they saw

AN EASTERN KAHN.

(32) THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI

it, they were very glad, and were filled with thankfulness and joy.

The star moved on. The wise men were quite sure that God was guiding them to the right place; so they followed it, till at last it led them to Bethlehem, and stood still over the very house where the young child was. Joseph and Mary were not now in the stable; they were in a very humble house, for you know they were poor people.

The wise men went into the house, and when they saw the babe, with Mary His mother, they fell down on their knees and worshipped Him. Then they opened their treasures, and took out their presents, and gave Him gold and sweet-smelling stuff to burn.

After this, the wise men had intended to go back to Jerusalem, to tell the people there that they had found the baby King. But God spoke to them in a dream, and told them that they were not to let the people know about it. So they returned to their own country another way.

CHAPTER VI.

WHAT KING HEROD DID.

THERE lived at Jerusalem at that time a very wicked king, whose name was Herod.

He was exceedingly cruel, and had caused num-

bers and numbers of innocent people to be put to death, either because he was afraid of them, or disliked them, or because they would not call him their king.

He even caused three of his own children to be killed. And some people he ordered to be burned alive; and some he ordered to be cut in two—but I cannot tell you half the cruel things he did, for it is too dreadful to think about.

This wicked king knew about the wise men having come to Jerusalem to look for a new-born King, and he was afraid. Afraid and jealous of a little infant! He could not bear that there should be another king.

He heard, too, that some people thought this baby King was Christ, the Son of God; and in his wicked heart he determined to kill Him. But he did not know where to find Jesus. So he sent for the chief priests and all the learned men, and when they came he asked them,

"Where do the Scriptures say that Christ shall be born?"

They told him, "In Bethlehem."

Then what do you think Herod did? He sent men at once to Bethlehem to kill this holy Child! and because there were many babies there, and he did not know which was the Lord Jesus, he ordered that they should kill every baby in every house.

Was not this terribly sad and terribly cruel?

But God can see into people's hearts as easily as we can look into people's faces, and He knew what Herod was going to do. But He would not let His dear Son be killed yet, for it was not the right time for Him to die.

So God sent an angel that night to speak to Joseph in a dream. The angel said,

"Get up quickly, Joseph, and take the young child and His mother, and go into another country, a great way off. You must stay there till I tell you that you may come away again, for Herod will try and find the young child, that he may kill Him."

Joseph got up that very moment, and told Mary his wife all that the angel had said to him. Then they took the precious Babe, and with all the haste they could, they set out in the dark night to go down to Egypt. No one saw them go, for they went away so quickly and so secretly.

Next day was a sad, sad time in Bethlehem!

Some soldiers came into the town, sent by Herod to do his wicked, cruel bidding. They went into every house, and wherever they saw a baby, they snatched it from its mother's arms and killed it.

Down every street they passed. The poor mothers saw them coming, and they clasped their little darlings tightly to their bosoms.

"Oh! do not hurt my child!" they cried, "do let it live!" But it was all in vain; the soldiers had

no pity; and in another moment it was torn away from its unhappy mother and killed.

What sad hearts there were in Bethlehem that night! what weeping and crying in every street! Not only in the town itself, but also in all the country round. Every little baby was lying dead.

Was Jesus amongst the murdered children? No: Joseph and Mary had escaped just in time to save the infant Saviour from Herod's cruel hands.

Very soon after this, King Herod died. And then once more God sent His angel to speak to Joseph in a dream.

"Arise," the angel said to him, "take the young child and His mother, and go back to your own country again; for Herod is dead."

So Joseph obeyed God, and did as the angel bade him, and they went to Nazareth; which, you remember, was the place where Joseph and Mary had always lived before Jesus was born.

CHAPTER VII.

THE BOYHOOD OF JESUS.

THE Bible tells us scarcely anything of the life of Jesus while He was a boy; but enough has been told us to make us able to picture Him to ourselves in His humble home in Nazareth.

He was brought up as the son of a poor man; for Joseph was a carpenter, and had to work for his daily bread; and we may be quite sure that, as soon

A STREET IN NAZARETH.

as He was able, Jesus would try and help him in the workshop and learn his trade. Indeed, the Bible tells us plainly that Jesus became a carpenter Himself. (Mark vi. 3.)

Then, again, we may certainly think of Him as going to the school every day* with other boys, and learning to read; doing everything that He had to do with all His heart, and in the best way: perfectly obedient to His teachers as well as to His parents.

Is it not wonderful to think that the Son of God condescended to live like any other little Jewish village boy? going to the same school, learning the same lessons, and doing the same tasks?

But do not forget that there was always one great difference between Him and all other children. What was it?

Jesus was without sin. He never did a wrong thing. Satan tried to tempt Him, as he tempts all children and grown-up people too, but Jesus would not listen to Satan. He prayed to His Father in heaven, and always did the thing that would please *Him*.

I told you before that He was "filled with wisdom," and that as He grew older and bigger He "increased in wisdom." Everything that He did was right and kind, and no one could ever find anything to blame Him for.

Will you try and be like Him? I dare say you think it is impossible; and of course no one *can* be like Him; but He will help us to be better than we

* We are told that even so long as eighty years before the birth of Christ, schools were established all over Palestine, and education was compulsory.

are, and to be *more* like Him every day, if we will ask Him.

Because Jesus was once a child Himself, He knows exactly what children feel; and He quite understands all their difficulties, and all their temptations, and all their sorrows. He loves little

JERUSALEM.

children, and loves to help them when they ask Him.

Will you then pray for His help? Not only when Satan tempts you to do things you know to be wrong, but also when you do not feel inclined to do the things you know you ought to do.

Have you ever heard about the Feast of the Pass-

over? It was a very solemn feast, which God had commanded the Jews to keep always, to remind them of the time, years and years before, when He had saved them in a wonderful way from being slaves, and had taken them out of a country where they were most cruelly treated, and where they were very miserable and unhappy.

Every year Joseph and Mary went up to Jerusalem to keep this feast, and to attend the solemn services in the Temple.

Little children, however, could not join; and it was not till Jesus was twelve years old that, for the first time, He was taken by His parents to keep the Passover with them.

This was a great event in His childhood. There was the long journey to be taken,* there were the hundreds and hundreds of people, flocking from all parts of the East to go up to Jerusalem at the same time; and there were numbers of boys too, besides the Lord Jesus, going for the first time to the holy city. How eager they must all have been to see that city and Temple, of which they had read so much in the Scriptures!

Once before, Jesus had been in the Temple. Do you remember when it was? When His parents had taken Him, as a little infant of six weeks old, to present Him to God.

* From Nazareth to Jerusalem is a distance of about eighty miles.

Good old Simeon, and Anna the prophetess, who had recognized Him as the promised Saviour, must have been dead when Jesus went this second time to the Temple; for we hear of no one then saying that He was the Son of God.

And now, amongst all the worshippers in that beautiful Temple, there was only *one* who had no wandering thoughts, only one who praised God with a *perfect* heart. You do not need that I should tell you who that was; you know it was the boy Christ.

At last the week of solemn services was over, and all the people who had gone up to attend this great feast of the Passover began to travel homewards again.

Joseph and Mary went too; and all that day they were journeying on, to return to their home at Nazareth.

But Jesus had stayed behind in Jerusalem, and His parents did not know it. When they did not see Him, they thought He was among the company (for a great many friends and relations were travelling with them), and so they were not at all unhappy. But when evening was coming on, and they stopped to rest for the night, then they looked for Him amongst their friends; and when they could not find Him they were greatly distressed.

What should they do? They could not rest till they had found Him; and so, after they had sought for Him anxiously, and had asked everybody they

(44) THE YOUNG SAVIOUR IN THE TEMPLE.

met if they had seen their dear Son, they went back very sadly to Jerusalem, seeking Him.

Three days passed before they found Him—three dreadful days of anxiety and unhappiness. And where do you think He was found at last?

In the Temple. There was the boy Jesus, sitting in the midst of many learned men, listening eagerly to them, and asking them questions.

For there was a large room in the Temple, where these learned men, called chief priests and rabbis, used to sit to teach young men and boys. They taught them the law of Moses, and examined them in the Scriptures. And Jesus had gone there to be taught.

The learned men did not know who He was, but they thought they had never seen such a wonderful scholar before. They were astonished to find how much He knew, how quickly He understood, and how wonderfully He answered their questions. Whatever Jesus did He did with all His might; and whatever He had to learn, He set His whole heart to it. This was another thing that made Him so different from all other children.

You may imagine how thankful and happy His parents were to see Him once more, and to find He was safe! But they had suffered so much in their anxiety about Him during those last three days, that His mother could not help complaining just a little, as she said,—

"My child, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been looking for you with aching hearts."

Jesus said, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?"

When Mary spoke of His father, she meant Joseph, but Jesus spoke of His *true* Father, God.

A CARPENTER'S SHOP AT NAZARETH.

I think His parents must have almost forgotten that this boy, who was always so obedient, and loving, and gentle, was God's own Son; for they did not at all understand when He told them that He must be doing His Father's work.

Do you think the Lord Jesus went home again with His parents after this?

Yes, He did. He returned with them to Naza-

reth, and was obedient to them just as before. And this was doing His Father's work, and obeying His Father's will!

And God was more and more pleased with Him; for as He increased in age and in wisdom, He also increased in favour with God and man.

And so Jesus was a pattern for us in loving obedience to parents, as well as in everything else.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS.

FOR a great many more years (eighteen), till He grew up to be a man, Jesus remained in Nazareth.

He was thirty years old now; but He was living quietly on in the old home. He had not yet begun to preach, or to do any miracle; He was doing His Father's will in the humble home in which He had been brought up.

People had become very wicked in those days. Every kind of iniquity, and wrong, and cruelty, was done in the land; and those people who still loved God, and grieved for all the sin that was going on around them, were looking and longing for a Saviour to come, who should take away all the evil, and make everything good.

JOHN THE BAPTIST.

The Saviour had indeed come; but they did not know it. And if they had been told that the carpenter of Nazareth was the Messiah, promised in the Scriptures, the Son of God, they would not have believed it.

Now, God wanted to prepare the people's hearts to believe in His dear Son, and to receive Him as their Saviour. So He sent a messenger to them.

This messenger was John the Baptist. He was a great prophet, and a great preacher; and God's Holy Spirit was in him from the day he was born. He was not dressed like other people; he wore a mantle of camel's hair, and had a leather girdle or belt round his waist.

He did not care what food he ate; he thought so much of the message God had given him, that he did not care for his body; so he ate the common food that only the beggars of that country eat—this was locusts (a kind of large grasshoppers) and wild honey; and he drank the water of the river.

Crowds of people went to hear this wonderful preacher, who was so unlike other men. And John spoke to them about their many sins, and told them all to repent.

What does repentance mean? It means a change of conduct, and a change of heart. When men begin to feel that all they do is wrong, and that every thought of their hearts is sinful, then they are thankful to hear of a Saviour, who can save them from sin, and can make them better.

THE RIVER JORDAN, WHERE JESUS WAS BAPTIZED.

As John the Baptist spoke to the people of their naughty ways, and of God's anger, many of them began to see how wrong they had been; and they confessed their sins, and were really sorry for all their wickedness.

Then John baptized them. He took them down to the river and baptized them, as a sign that they were willing to give up their sins, and that God was willing to pardon them, and to wash away their sins.

After that, John spoke to them about the Messiah. He told them that the Lord who was coming was very great and very holy—so holy that even John himself was not worthy to stoop down and untie His shoe—and that *He* would baptize people with the Holy Spirit, which would make their hearts clean, in the same way that pure water makes the body clean.

But though John spoke to the people about the Saviour, and told them that He was near, he did not himself know that Jesus was the Saviour. So God said to him,—

"When you see the Holy Spirit coming down from heaven, and resting upon any one, you will know that that one is the Son of God."

Well, while John was teaching, preaching, and baptizing at the river Jordan, Jesus Himself came to be baptized.

Had *He* any sins to confess? Did *He* need repentance?

Oh, no! But He came to take the sinners' place; and all that it was right for *them* to do, *He* would do; that in everything He might be perfectly obedient to His Father's will.

PLAIN OF THE JORDAN.

As I told you just now, John did not know that Jesus was Christ, but he knew that He was very holy, and pure, and good; and he was distressed that Jesus, who he felt was so much better than himself, should come like a sinner to be baptized. So he said,—

"I have need to be baptized by you; why then do you come to me?"

Jesus answered: "Suffer it to be so now; for it is right for us to do all that is commanded."

When He said this, He went down to the river, and John baptized Him.

As soon as this was done, Jesus went up out of the water again, praying; and at that moment a wonderful thing happened. The heavens were opened, and the Spirit of God came down like a dove from heaven, and rested upon Jesus. And a voice—God's voice—was heard, which said,—

"Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased."

John the Baptist saw the Holy Spirit, and he heard the voice; and so then he knew that Jesus was indeed the Son of God.

CHAPTER IX.

THE TEMPTATION.

DIRECTLY after our Lord had been baptized, the Holy Spirit led Him into the wilderness.

There were no houses there, nor pretty fields, nor gardens; and there were no people there. But wild beasts were there,—lions and bears and wolves, and at night they used to walk about, and howl, and roar; but they did not touch Jesus. God kept them from hurting Him.

For forty days and forty nights, Jesus was in that

dreadful wilderness; and all that long time He had nothing to eat.

THE TEMPTATION.

He was not quite alone there. Some one else was in the wilderness,—watching Him, fearing Him, and hating Him. Who was it?

It was Satan. Satan knew quite well that Jesus was the Son of God; and he hated Him because He was good, and pure, and holy. But most of all he hated Him because he knew that Jesus had come into the world to be the Saviour of sinners; and that He would save men from hell.

You know, Satan wants to make everybody naughty, that they may go to hell. He likes to see people—and children too—doing wicked things; and he is pleased when they are in trouble and unhappy. He cannot bear that any one should go to heaven.

So Satan thought that he would try and tempt Jesus to do wrong. For if Jesus had sinned only once, He could not have been our Saviour.

When the forty days were over, Jesus was very hungry indeed. Satan knew that He was hungry; so now he came and spoke to Jesus. He said,—

"If you are God's Son, make these stones into bread."

He wanted to tempt Jesus to doubt His Father's love, and not to wait His Father's time to feed Him.

Could Jesus turn the stones into bread?

Yes. But He trusted His Father; and though He was so hungry, He waited patiently; for He knew God would feed Him in His own good time.

The Lord Jesus only replied to Satan out of the Scriptures; and this is what He said,—

"It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by the word of God."

WILDERNESS OF JUDEA.

This means, that bread cannot keep us alive if God wills us to die; and that God can keep us alive *without* bread, if He wills us to live.

How different Jesus was to Adam and Eve! *They* were in a beautiful garden, where they had everything they wanted; and Satan made them sin by tempting them to eat the one thing God had forbidden. They were disobedient. *Jesus* was in a lonely wilderness, wanting food, and Satan tempted *Him* to eat, to satisfy His hunger; but He would not distrust or disobey His Father. He was always obedient.

Then the devil tried another way to make Him sin. He took Jesus into the holy city, Jerusalem, and set Him upon a very high part of the Temple,—so high that it would make you dreadfully giddy to look down,—and he said to Him,—

"If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here. Do not be afraid. You trust your Father, and God will take care of you, and send His angels to keep you from being hurt."

Ah! God's promise is to take care of those who walk in His ways and obey Him. But if Jesus had done as Satan told Him, He would have been doing the *devil's* will, and not God's will. So the Lord answered that wicked tempter again out of the Scriptures:

"It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

Once more the devil tried to make Him sin.

He took Jesus to the top of a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world,

and all the beautiful things that are in them,—all the thousands and thousands of people, all the gold, and all the treasures. Then he said to Jesus,—

"I will give you all these things, and they shall

THE DEAD SEA.

be yours, if only you will fall down before me, and worship me."

Satan meant to say that if Jesus would only worship him, he would never tempt people to be naughty any more; and so, all the sin and misery that so grieved the holy heart of Jesus, would come to an end at once.

But would Satan have kept his promise? No; for he is a liar, and cannot speak the truth.

And does the world belong to Satan, that he may give it away? No; God made the world, and all that is in it; so it belongs to God alone.

Jesus was very angry with the devil for daring to say such things.

"Go away, Satan!" He said to him; "for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

The temptation was over. Satan could not make our Blessed Saviour sin; so he went away from Him.

Then God sent some angels to Jesus, and they fed Him.

Do you notice, dear children, how our Lord answered the devil, each time, only out of the Scriptures? Should it not make us love God's Holy Word, and study it, and always try to walk in the light of it? The Bible is called "the sword of the Spirit;" and this is the weapon we should use when we are tempted to do evil.

Let us always ask ourselves: "What has God told us in His Holy Word?" And then, if we obey the directions God has given us, we shall be kept from doing Satan's work and obeying Satan's will.

Remember, when you are tempted, that prayer to God will always keep you from yielding to temptation. Say, "Lord, help me!" And He will do it.

CHAPTER X.

THE DISCIPLES OF JESUS.

IT was the Holy Spirit that had taken Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil; and it was the Holy Spirit, also, that, after the temptation, took Him into Galilee. And there, for the first time, He began to preach.

From this time to the day of His death He never ceased going about doing good; and as He went from place to place, He talked to the people about God.

It was about this time, also, that Jesus chose some friends to be always with Him, and these friends were called His disciples. Jesus loved them very much, and they loved Him, and liked nothing so well as to be always with Him, listening to His blessed words. They used to call Him "Master" and "Lord."

Jesus wanted to make His disciples teachers and preachers, like Himself. And this is why He chose to have them always with Him, that He might tell them about His Father.

When He was alone with them, He used to explain everything to them about God and heaven. Little by little, as they were able to *take it in*, He taught them more and more about heavenly things.

And now I will tell you how some of these disciples first began to know and to follow Jesus.

One day, as John the Baptist saw the Lord walking along, he said to two men who were with him:

"Look! There is the Lamb of God."

When the men heard John say that, at once they

SHORES OF THE LAKE GENNESARETH.

followed Jesus, walking quietly behind Him. Jesus knew that they were following, and He turned round and asked:

"Are you looking for any one?"

They answered: "Master, where do you live?"

Jesus replied so kindly: "Come and see."

So Jesus took them to the house where He was

staying, and the two men remained with Him that day. After that, they were almost always with Him; for they knew that He was the Son of God.

One of these men, whose name was Andrew, had a brother called Peter, and he wanted *him* to follow Christ. So he went to find him and to tell him the wonderful news.

"We have found the Messiah," he said. And then he took Peter to Jesus.

Did Peter believe in Him, too? Yes! from that moment he became a loving disciple of the Lord.

All these disciples—Peter, and John, and Andrew, and that other disciple—were fishermen. They were poor men, and had to work hard for their daily bread. They were obliged to go out in their ships, sometimes all day, and often all night, to catch fish. They were very fond of their ships; but, at a word from Jesus, they left them to follow Him.

Did they think that Jesus could make them rich?

Oh, no! it was not for this they wanted to be with Him. They knew that Jesus was very *poor*, even poorer than themselves. *He* had no home of His own; but the disciples had homes where they might always live.

Yet they preferred to follow their Master; though by doing so they were often very tired, for Jesus walked much that He might preach to as many people as possible. And they were often very hungry. For sometimes it happened that such crowds fol-

lowed Jesus, that they had not time to eat: and sometimes they were far from any town or village, and had a long way to go to buy bread. But sometimes people invited them into their own houses, and gave them food.

The day after Peter had joined the other disciples, Jesus was walking further on, to go to another place, when He met a man whose name was Philip.

"Come with me," the Lord said.

Without a question and without a doubt, Philip followed Him; for he, too, knew that Jesus was the Son of God.

Now, if you had found out something that had made you very happy, would you not like to share the good news with those you love?

This is exactly what Philip did. He had a friend called Nathanael, and he wanted to bring him to Jesus. So he went to him, and said,—

"We have found Jesus of Nazareth, who the Scriptures tell us is the Son of God."

But Nathanael said, "Nazareth is a very bad, wicked place; can anything good come from there?"

"Come and see," was Philip's answer.

So they went both together. And as Jesus saw Nathanael coming, He said,—

"Here is one who is very truthful and honest."

Nathanael was surprised to hear Jesus say this, and he asked in wonder,—

"How is it that you know me?"

Jesus answered, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig-tree, I saw you."

Nathanaël did not doubt any longer. He exclaimed, "Master, you are the Son of God! you are the King of Israel!"

Jesus said to him, "Do you believe just because I said I saw you under the fig-tree? You shall see much greater wonders than these. One day you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

And so Nathanael also became a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FIRST MIRACLE.

DO you remember why it was that Jesus had left His home in Nazareth?

It was to go a long way off, to be baptized by John in the river Jordan. This had been done some weeks ago, and He had never been home since.

But now He was going to return to Nazareth once more. And do you not think Mary must have been longing to see her Son again?

Two months have passed away, and once again the Lord is in the little town where He had lived for so many years. But He does not return

alone. Some men are with Him; can you tell me who they are?

They are the five disciples of whom I told you in the last chapter. I think Mary's heart must have been full of joy when she found that at last there were people who were beginning to believe in Jesus, and to call Him the Son of God.

Now I am going to tell you of the first miracle that He ever did.

Do you know what is meant by a miracle?

It is any wonderful thing that is done that no *man* can do, but only *God*. Jesus was God, and so He could do miracles.

In a house a few miles away from Nazareth there was a wedding, and the mother of Jesus was there. In that country a grand feast was always given at the time of a marriage, and this feast often lasted several days.

Well, Jesus was invited, and His disciples, to the marriage feast, and they went.

The people who gave the feast were poor, and they could not afford much wine; so it happened that after a little while it was all gone.

What were they to do to get more?

The mother of Jesus knew that there was *One* sitting at the table who could help them, and so she just simply said to her blessed Son,—

"They have no wine."

But Jesus answered her, "What have I to do with

you in this matter? The proper time is not yet come for me to work."

Jesus always waited His Father's time, and not one moment before the right time would He do anything. He was as patient in waiting as He was patient in love and in suffering.

Mary felt quite sure that He was going to help them, so she turned to the servants, and said to them,—

"Whatsoever He tells you to do, do it at once."

There were some large stone jars in the room, used for holding water. Jesus said unto the servants, "Fill those water-pots with water." And they filled them quite full, up to the very top.

Then Jesus said, "Now pour out some in a cup, and take it to the ruler of the feast."

The servants did as they were told; and when the ruler of the feast had tasted it, what do you think he found? That it was no longer water, but wine—the very best wine he had ever tasted.

But how could that be?

Why, Jesus had changed into wine all the water that was in those large stone jars. So now there was enough, and more than enough, for all the guests.

The ruler of the feast could not understand where this wine, that was so much better than what they had been drinking, had come from. So he called the master of the house, and said to him,—

"Why did you not give us this good wine before?"

But the master of the house did not know how it had come; he only knew that all he had before had been quite finished.

FILL THE WATER POTS.

But the *servants* knew all about it, and now they told the whole story: how Jesus had made them fill the great stone jars with water, and how He had turned all the water into wine.

How astonished the people were! And do you not think that the master of the house was very thankful, and Mary very glad?

And what do you think the *disciples* thought about it? They, too, were very much astonished at the wonderful thing their Lord had done; and it made them believe all the more firmly that He was the Son of God.

And this is why Jesus did miracles; to show His power and glory, and to show people that He was the Christ.

Yet in spite of the wonderful things He did, many people *would not* believe in Him.

CHAPTER XII.

JESUS AT THE PASSOVER.

VERY soon after the first miracle, Jesus went to Jerusalem to keep the Passover.

You remember I told you before what a very great number of people used to flock to the holy city to keep this yearly feast. They came from all parts; from places a long way off, and even from other countries.

The city was crowded. Every street, every house was full; and hundreds of people had to make for themselves little tents of mats and branches of trees,

to shelter them during the night because there was no room for them in any house.

Then, besides all the many people, there were hundreds and hundreds of cattle, sheep and oxen, driven into the city for sacrifice, and doves and pigeons too, were brought in great numbers; for these birds were what the *poor* offered to God in sacrifice, —those who could not afford to offer a sheep or a lamb.

You may imagine how bright, and busy, and noisy it was in the streets of Jerusalem at that time; for it was a time of rejoicing, and of thanking God for past mercies.

So Jesus went into the Temple to join in the solemn services there. The Temple was a most beautiful building, far grander than anything you or I have ever seen. But what a sight met His eye!

The grand entrance-court of God's house was full of *cattle*, and crowded with men who were buying and selling them! Other men, with cages full of pigeons and doves, offering them for sale! There were other men sitting before tables, on which were piled up heaps of money; these people were called money-changers. And all the noise of the men's voices, of the sheep bleating, and of the oxen lowing, could be distinctly heard in the inner part of the Temple, where the services were going on.

Was this a right use to make of any part of the house of God?

(70) DRIVING OUT THE MONEY-LENDERS.

No, certainly not; it was a great sin so to use it.

Four hundred years before, it had been prophesied —or foretold—in the Scriptures, that one day the Lord would suddenly come into His Temple, to cleanse and to purify it. That time had now come.

Jesus was very angry at all He saw. He could not bear that His Father's house should be so dishonored; and in His holy anger He made a scourge, or whip, of small cords, to chase out all those who were so profaning it.

First He drove out all the sheep and the oxen, and those who were selling them. Next he went to where the money-changers were sitting, and He threw down all their tables, and upset the money that was piled up on each, leaving the men to grope about on the floor for all the coin which had been scattered, and was rolling about. Then He said to those who sold the doves,—

"Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a place for buying and selling."

No one dared resist Him.

Though they hated Him for what He had done, yet they felt in their hearts that He was right, and they were afraid of Him.

When the proud priests and Pharisees heard what Jesus had done, they did not dare complain; for they, too, knew quite well that they had done wickedly to allow such deeds to take place in the holy Temple.

But they came to Jesus, and asked Him to give them some sign that He had a *right* to act as He had done.

Jesus gave them no sign: only a prophecy.

He foretold that they would one day kill Him, and that He would rise again the third day.

But they did not understand what He said.

Jesus must often have seen the same disgraceful sights in the Temple when He had gone up at other times to keep the Passover: why did He not cleanse it before?

He waited the proper time—His Father's time! He did not begin to teach before; but now that He had shown Himself to be the Christ, the Son of God, He must show to everybody in Jerusalem that His Father must be honored, and that the Scriptures must be fulfilled.

Jesus did some miracles at that Passover feast, but the Bible does not tell us what they were.

Many people, however, believed He was the Christ, when they saw these miracles. But Jesus, who could see into their hearts, knew that they did not love Him, though they believed Him to be the Son of God.

So He felt that He could not trust them.

CHAPTER XIII.

NICODEMUS.

THE things that Jesus had done in the Temple made people talk about Him a great deal.

The rulers of the Jews, too, and the proud priests and Pharisees talked about Him; but they were angry with Him, and disliked Him, and they despised Him because He was poor, and because He came from Galilee; also, they did not believe that He was the Messiah, nor even a prophet.

But one of these rulers, whose name was Nicodemus, thought over all that he had heard about Him—thought of His holy anger in the Temple, of the miracles He had done afterwards, and of the way some people were calling Him the Son of God—and he felt that he *must* try and see Him, and speak to Him.

Now, Nicodemus was not only a ruler, he was also a great teacher; yet he felt that Jesus was more holy, and a greater teacher than himself.

But what would the Jews say, and what would the *rulers* say, if they knew that their great teacher was going to see the Carpenter from Nazareth, whom they despised and disliked so much?

Ah! Nicodemus was afraid of what they might say and think. He knew that the other rulers did

not like Jesus to teach; and he was sure that they would be very angry with him if they knew that he was going to learn of Jesus, and to ask Him questions.

JESUS AND NICODEMUS.

But he was quite determined to go; only he made up his mind that he would go to Jesus when it was dark, and no one could see him.

As soon then as it was night, he went out into the

dark streets, and walked along till he came to the house where Jesus was staying; and when he had gone in, he said to Jesus,—

"Master, we know that you are a teacher come from God: for no one could do the wonderful things you do, unless God was with him."

Jesus could see into the heart of His visitor; and he knew that Nicodemus had come humbly, really wanting to be taught. So Jesus began by telling him plainly that unless he, and every one else, became quite changed, he could never get to heaven.

Nicodemus was surprised to hear this. He thought that if he did good deeds and kept the law of Moses, he was certain of going to heaven.

But Jesus explained to him that we need the Spirit of God within us to make our *hearts* clean.

The Lord talked a great deal to Nicodemus that night, and told him many things. He told him that He—God's Son—was going to die for sinners; and that all who believe in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Then He told Nicodemus of God's great love to us; and how He gave His only Son, that all who believe in Him should live with Him for ever in heaven.

Nicodemus listened so earnestly. But he could not quite understand all Jesus said.

However, he always loved Jesus after that; and believed that He was the Son of God.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA.

NEITHER the Jews in Jerusalem, nor their rulers, wished to have the Lord amongst them. They would not listen to His words, and they did not care to be taught by Him,—indeed, as I have told you before, the rulers were very angry at His teaching at all,—so Jesus left the city.

Is it not very strange that so few people loved the Lord Jesus, when He was also so very gentle and so kind? and when He went about amongst them only to do good?

But as it was then, so it is now. There are so many, many people who do not care at all for our Blessed Saviour; and there are so few who really love Him! Yet He is just the same now as He always was,—the same gentle, loving Jesus, always ready to receive any who wish to go to Him.

So because they did not care to have Him in Jerusalem, Jesus went, with His disciples, into the land of Judæa; and He preached to the country people in the same places where John the Baptist had taught and baptized.

A great many people came to Him there, and believed in Him, and were sorry for their sins. And the disciples of Jesus baptized all those who wished to lead a new life.

But after some time, the rulers in Jerusalem heard about it, and they were angry, and wished to prevent the people going after Jesus. When Jesus knew this, He went away from Judæa, and determined to go back to Galilee again, where his old home was. But, first of all, He wished to go through another country, called Samaria.

Now, I must explain to you that the people who lived in Samaria were called Samaritans, and the people who lived in Judæa were called Jews; and the Jews and the Samaritans hated each other, and could never show each other any kindness.

One day, Jesus and His disciples had been walking a long way, and they were very tired. They had left Judæa behind them, and had come very near to a city of Samaria, when they reached a shady spot where was a deep well of clear, cold water. It was the middle of the day, and very hot, and Jesus was too tired to go any further. So He sat down on the well to rest, while His disciples went on into the town to buy food.

Presently, while He was sitting there alone, a woman of Samaria came that way, carrying a large pitcher on her head to fetch some water. Jesus was very thirsty; and when the woman had drawn up her pitcher out of the well full of cool, delicious water, Jesus said to her,—

"Let me drink some."

But the woman would not give Him any. She said,—

"You are a Jew; why do you ask *me* to give you water? for the Jews and the Samaritans have nothing to do with each other."

Jesus was not angry with the woman for her unkindness in refusing to give Him a drink of water. But He said to her so gently,—

"If you knew who I am, you would have asked

JACOB'S WELL.

me to give you living water; and I would have given it to you."

The woman wondered what Jesus could mean; so she answered,—

"Sir, the well is very deep, and you have nothing to draw water with; so where could you get that living water from?"

Jesus said, "If any one drinks of this water he

shall thirst again; but if any one shall drink of the water that I shall give him, he shall never thirst."

What did Jesus mean?

He spoke of the Holy Spirit which He will give to all who ask Him. Those who have the love of God in their hearts are always happy, and joyful, and hopeful; for they know that God is their Friend, and that when this life is over, everlasting life will begin with Him in heaven.

But the woman did not understand this; and yet she seemed to feel as if the stranger had some blessing to give. So she asked for it.

"Sir," she said, "give me this living water, that I may never be thirsty again, or be obliged to come here to draw water."

So, without knowing it, she was really asking Jesus for the Holy Spirit. And Jesus gave it to her, as He said He would. But first He began to teach her; for she was very ignorant and very sinful. She did not know rightly about God,* nor how to pray to Him.

So, first of all, He began to teach her *about herself*. He showed her that she was a sinner, and that He knew all about it.

Then He told her about God His Father.

He told her that God is a Spirit. Though we cannot see Him, yet He can see us, for He is everywhere, and is always near us. He is so forgiving

* "Ye worship ye know not what."—*John* iv. 22.

THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA.

and so kind that He wants all poor sinners to come to Him, that they may be forgiven, and learn to do better. But then they must really *want* Him to forgive them, and not only say the words; for God can see into all hearts, and He only answers the prayers of those who *mean what they say*.

The woman listened very attentively to Jesus as He was telling her all this, but she did not quite understand even yet. However, she began to wish to do better, and she said to Jesus,—

"I know that the Messiah is coming one day; when He comes He will teach us."

How great was her surprise when Jesus told her,—

"*I* am He; I, who am speaking to you now."

What! *He!* the poor, tired, thirsty traveller, who was sitting on the well to rest! *He* the Messiah! Could it be?

Yes; she felt in her heart that it was true.

You remember that the disciples of Jesus had gone away into the town to buy food. They had now just returned to their Lord again and they wondered to find Him talking to the woman. But they did not dare ask Him, "Why do you speak to her?"

And what does the woman do now?

As fast as she could, she hurried away to the town, that she might tell all the people there the joyful news that the Saviour of the world had come.

She was so eager to tell the wonderful story, that in her haste she quite forgot to take back her pitcher.

"Come," she said to the men of the town; "come, see a man who has told me all the things I have ever done. This must be the Messiah."

While the woman was telling her neighbours to come to Jesus, the disciples tried to make their Master take some food.

"Master, eat," they said to Him.

But Jesus was not hungry now.

He had been both hungry, and thirsty, and tired before; but He cared so much for the poor sinner to whom He had been speaking, and He wanted so much to make her forsake her sins and love His Father, that He forgot all about His food, and He did not want any now. So when the disciples begged Him to eat, He said to them,—

"I have meat to eat that you do not know about."

"Has any one brought Him any food to eat?" the disciples asked each other, wondering.

Then Jesus explained to them what He meant.

"My meat is to do my Father's will, and to finish His work."

More than His food, more than His rest, more than His *life*, He loved to do His Father's will at all times.

And now the Samaritans came flocking to Him

out of the city; and as Jesus sat on the well He taught them.

As they listened to Him they forgot He was a Jew; and, as they heard His gracious words, they longed to have Him always with them, and they begged Him to stay with them.

So Jesus remained two days in the city.

As He preached, a great many people believed in

AN ANCIENT WELL.

Him. Some believed because of what the woman had told them when she said, "He has told me all the things that I have ever done."

And many more believed in Him because of what they heard Him say; and they said to the woman,—

"Now we believe, not because of what you told

us, for we have heard Him ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

CHAPTER XV.

THE NOBLEMAN'S SON.

AFTER Jesus, with His disciples, had remained two days in that Samaritan city where He had been so gladly received, He went away again, and continued His journey to Galilee.

At last He arrived at Cana, which was the place where He had done His first miracle, by changing the water into wine.

The news of His coming had spread all over that country, for many of the people had been to Jerusalem at the feast, and had seen all that Jesus had done there. So they were talking about Him a great deal.

Now, there was a city about twenty miles off—which is a very long way—called Capernaum, and in that city there lived a nobleman who was in sad trouble. He had a son who was very ill, and the doctors could not cure him. He was getting worse and worse, and the poor father did not know what to do.

Just at this time the nobleman heard that Jesus had come back from Judæa. This was indeed good

news! He had heard that Jesus had cured many sick people, and he thought that perhaps He would make his poor, sick son well again if he asked Him. So he made up his mind to go to Him at once.

Very early in the morning he set off. He had a long way to go, and there was no time to lose, for his son was sinking fast.

When he got to Cana, he went straight to Jesus, and told him the great trouble he was in. Then he begged Jesus very earnestly to go back with him to Capernaum to heal his child, because he was at the point of death.

Jesus wanted to see if the nobleman really *believed* that He had the power to heal his son; so He said to him,—

"You will not believe in me unless you see me do miracles!"

The man said, "Sir, come down, or my child will die."

He *did* believe that Jesus could make him well; and so he wanted Him to set out, that very minute, to go to Capernaum.

But Jesus did not intend to go with him, for there was no reason why He should; He could cure the sick child just as easily from a distance as near. He wanted, too, to see if the nobleman would believe His simple word.

"Go home again," Jesus said; "your son is getting well."

Did the nobleman believe it?

Yes. As soon as Jesus had spoken, all his sadness went away, and he felt quite happy. Then he went away to go back to his own house.

Next day, while he was still on his way home (for you remember I told you that Capernaum was a long way from Cana), his servants met him with the happy news.

"Your son is much better; he is getting well," they said.

"What time was it when he began to get better?" the nobleman asked.

They answered, "Yesterday, at one o'clock, the fever left him."

So the father knew that it was at the very same hour when Jesus had said to him, "Your son is getting well."

Do you not think the nobleman must have loved Jesus very much after that?

Yes, he did. And he and all his family believed that Jesus was the Son of God.

This was the second miracle that Jesus did in Cana of Galilee.

CHAPTER XVI.

JESUS DRIVEN AWAY FROM NAZARETH.

AT last Jesus came to Nazareth, the place where He had been brought up. He had not been home for a long time; and since last He was there, He had done many wonderful things.

What was the work Jesus used to do when He lived in Nazareth, before He began to go about to preach and to heal the sick?

You remember that He was a carpenter's son, and was Himself a carpenter; and no doubt He had often done work for the townspeople. Everybody knew him quite well in the little town, and now that they had heard so much of what He had done in other places, they were very eager to see Him again.

It was the Sabbath day, and Jesus, as He was always accustomed to do, went into the synagogue.

What is a synagogue? It is a building like our churches, where people meet to pray to and worship God.

There Jesus sat, in the house of prayer, where often and often He had been, from the time He was a little boy. *Then* He was silent, and used only to listen; *now* He was going to read and preach.

The synagogue was full, and every eye was upon

Him as He stood up to read. Then the book of the prophet Isaiah (part of our Bible) was given to Him. Jesus took the book and found the place where it is written:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are captive, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

When He had read this, He closed the book, and gave it again to the minister, and sat down; for Jesus always preached sitting down.

And all the people in the synagogue kept looking at Him still, and never took their eyes off Him.

Then Jesus began to tell them that *He* was the one upon whom the Spirit of God was—that *He* was the Messiah spoken of in that Scripture.

Just at first they liked to listen to Him. There was a power and a grace in the Saviour's words and manner that filled the people with wonder and admiration. But soon they began to change their minds, and to get angry. They whispered amongst each other,—

"Is not this the carpenter? the son of Joseph and Mary? We have known Him all His life and we know His brothers too; and His sisters are living amongst us. Does *He* try to make us believe that He is the Messiah?"

Jesus knew quite well all that they were thinking of. He knew that they were wanting Him to do some great miracle; He knew that they were jealous, because He had done wonderful things in other places, and not there; and He told them that He knew it all, and that it was only what he had expected.

But He warned them against hardness of heart and unbelief; and He told them that God could take away blessings from them, and give them to others, who would show themselves to be more worthy.

The people were proud and jealous, and they could not bear to hear Jesus speak like this.

"What business has He to teach at all?" they said.

They were mad with anger and hate. Though it was the Sabbath day, and though they were in God's house of prayer, all the people who were in the synagogue rose from their seats, and in their fury they seized hold of the holy, gentle Saviour, dragged Him out of the synagogue and out of the city, and took Him to the edge of a very steep hill, intending to kill Him, by throwing Him down headlong.

Yes! they would have murdered Him! But His time—His *Father's* time—was not yet come. He intended to die for sinners—even for those cruel, rude, and ungrateful Nazarenes—but not now.

And so it happened, that just when they least expected it, Jesus worked a miracle.

In a moment He was gone.

Where?

They could not see Him; for He hid Himself from their eyes, and passed right through the very midst of them.

Gone! because they thrust Him out, and would not have Him amongst them.

Gone for ever! for we never hear of His returning to Nazareth any more. How sad!

Oh, how wicked and foolish the Nazarenes had been! They had known Jesus for thirty years, and had never known him to commit one fault. They had never known Him to do an unkind thing, or speak an unkind word. They knew Him to be sinless and holy, and yet they wished to kill Him.

We may be sure the Saviour's heart was sad and full of grief as He turned away from that little town. He longed to give the people that "living water" of which He had spoken to the woman of Samaria—the Holy Spirit—but they would not.

The Samaritans believed in Him, and received Him: the Nazarenes rejected Him, and thrust Him away from them.

CHAPTER XVII.

JESUS CALLS HIS DISCIPLES AGAIN.

THE Lord Jesus having been driven away from Nazareth by the savage fury of the people who lived there, went down to the Lake of Gennesa-

HILLS OVERLOOKING THE SEA OF GALILEE.

reth; and there it was that He chose to live and work.

It was a most beautiful place. All kinds of flowers grew in that lovely valley; and there were a great many different sorts of fruits—grapes and oranges, figs and almonds, dates and pomegranates. The air was soft and warm, and full of delicious scent from a thousand flowers.

Beautiful birds are there also, in plenty—the roller bird, with its bright blue wings, and the king-fisher, with its gay and many-colored plumage. Then the Lake, too, with its clear and sparkling water, was very beautiful. In it there were quantities of fishes; and many people got their living by catching the fish and selling them.

But it was not because of its beauty that Jesus chose to live in that valley. It was because there were so many thousands of people there. All round the Lake of Gennesareth there were a great number of towns and villages; and every town and village was full of people, for it was a very busy place.

And so it was to preach the Gospel to the many thousands there, that Jesus went to live amongst them.

Do you know the meaning of the word "Gospel?"

It means "good news." And was it not good news that Jesus had to tell them? that *He* was come—the Saviour of the world—to seek and to save all poor sinners who were sorry for their naughtiness, if they would only believe and trust in Him.

You remember I told you of some fishermen who had become disciples of Jesus,—John, and Andrew, and Simon? Their home was in this Lake country. You remember, too, that they had been with their Lord at Jerusalem, Samaria and Cana, and had seen all the wonderful things He had done. They had seen Him work miracles; they had seen Him heal the sick by a word, and they had listened to His teaching.

But now they were home again, and were working at their old trade of fishing, and Jesus was not with them.

We are not told when they got separated from their Master; perhaps it was when He escaped in that wonderful way from the angry Nazarenes.

I think they must have felt very sad, not having their Lord with them; and perhaps they were beginning to fear that He could not be the Messiah, after all. And now, too, they heard bad news, which grieved them. John the Baptist, who had been their teacher, who had baptized them, and who had pointed them to Jesus as the Lamb of God who had come to take away the sins of the world,—John the Baptist, that great preacher and prophet, had been put in prison by the wicked King Herod. How sad it all was! So different from what they had hoped and expected!

One day Peter and Andrew were on the sea-shore, casting a net into the water, to try and catch some

fish. A little further on, James and John were sitting in a ship with their father mending their nets, which had been torn and broken by the sharp corners and edges of the rocks. They were all very busy, when, lo! Jesus came that way! He stopped, and called them.

"Leave the fishes, and come with me; and I will teach you how to catch men."

What did He mean by this?

He meant that He would teach them to do *His* work.

And what was His work?

To seek and to save sinners; to preach the Gospel to the poor.

As soon as the disciples heard that voice they knew and loved so well, they obeyed at once. They left their fathers, their ships and their nets, and went to their own dear Master once more.

And now Jesus began again His work of love and kindness. He taught in the synagogues, and He healed the sick. And the people were so eager to hear the word of God that a very great number followed Him.

But where were Peter, and Andrew, and James, and John? They were gone back to their fishing again. They did not seem to understand that if they were to help Jesus in His great work, they must give up their fishing altogether.

They had been out all night in their boats; they

had worked hard; but they had not caught anything. When the morning came, they brought their boats to land, and got out of them, and began to wash and clean their nets. While they were doing this, Jesus came.

He had been speaking to the people; and they had pressed so closely upon Him, either to hear His words or to be healed of their sicknesses, that as they came closer and closer, they were preventing His being able to move about.

So He got into one of the boats, which belonged to Peter, and begged Peter to push out the boat a little into the water. Then Jesus sat down and taught the people from the boat.

I dare say He was very tired when He had finished speaking to them. But He did not think of Himself at all. As soon as His sermon had come to an end, He thought only of His poor disciples. He knew that they had been out fishing all night, and had caught nothing at all. So He said to Peter:

"Push your ship into deep water, and then let down your nets once more."

Peter almost doubted whether it would be of any use.

"Master," he said, "we have toiled all night and have taken nothing; but as you tell me to do it, I will let down the net."

And now, in a moment, as soon as ever they had

"WE HAVE TOILED ALL NIGHT."

done it, such a multitude of fishes came into the net that it was actually breaking. Then they beckoned to James and John that they should bring their boat quickly and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships so full that they were almost sinking. Never, in all their lives, had the fishermen taken such an enormous number of fishes before, at one time.

When Peter saw the miracle that had just been done, he felt how *great* Jesus was, and how unworthy he himself was to have such a Master. He fell down on his knees at Jesus' feet, and said:

"Go away from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

He was so astonished, and so were the other disciples, at the number of the fishes which they had taken.

How gently and tenderly Jesus answered him!

"Do not be afraid; from this time you shall catch men."

Not Peter only, but James, and John, and Andrew also, began to understand that if they were, indeed, to become fishers of men, they must give up everything for Christ.

And so they did. They did not hesitate. They brought their ships to land, and then they left all, and followed their Blessed Master.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A SABBATH AT CAPERNAUM.

CAPERNAUM was the name of one of the many towns on the borders of the beautiful Lake of Gennesareth; and here it was that Jesus lived for a long time. He had no home—no house of His own; but it is supposed that He lived in Peter's house.

As I told you before, Jesus did not now work as a carpenter; He was always going about doing good. Though he lived at Capernaum, He often made long journeys from there, going to other towns all round the lake, and going up into the hill country, all over Galilee.

Teaching, preaching and healing were His constant work, day after day.

Now I am going to tell you of the way Jesus spent His first Sabbath at Capernaum; and you will see how very good He was, and how much more He cared for others than for Himself.

First of all, He went into the synagogue and taught. This He always did, wherever He was; and people always wondered as they listened to Him; for He did not teach them like any one else.

While He was speaking in the synagogue, and the people were very attentively listening, on a sudden a great cry was heard. A poor man was there who

had an evil spirit in him; and he hated and feared Jesus, and he hated His words. How dreadful this was! No one could cure him, for it is only God who has power over the devil and all wicked spirits. The man cried out with a loud voice,—

"Let us alone; what have we to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth? Are you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God."

SITE OF CAPERNAUM.

Jesus was grieved. The sight of sin, or suffering, always made Him sad. He turned to the poor man, and He rebuked, or spoke sternly—not to *him*, but to the devil that was in him.

"Be silent, and come out of him," the Lord said.

And the devil must obey! The poor man fell on the ground, screaming out; but in a moment he was well. At the Saviour's word the evil spirit had gone

out of him, and the man was at peace and in his right mind.

Just think of the amazement of the people, as they saw what Jesus had done! They said to each other,—

"What thing is this? for He has power even over the evil spirits, and they obey Him!"

When they had come out of the synagogue, Jesus went into the house of Peter and Andrew; and James and John went with Him. And the mother of Peter's wife was very ill indeed, with a great fever; and they told Jesus about it, and begged Him to make her well.

At once He went to the sick woman's bedside. He rebuked the fever (as He had rebuked the evil spirit); then He gently took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she was quite well.

After a fever, a person is always very weak; but Peter's mother-in-law was not. Jesus had cured her completely, so that she was quite strong and able to get up and busy herself in getting ready the Sabbath meal for her kind and Holy Guest and His disciples.

See how much Jesus had already done! but the day's work was not nearly over yet.

All the people in Capernaum had heard of the miracle He had performed in the synagogue that morning, by healing the poor demoniac; and so

every one who was ill, or diseased, or possessed by an evil spirit, wished to go to the great Prophet and Healer to be made well.

But the Jews were very strict about keeping the Sabbath holy, and they even thought it wrong for sick people to go and be cured on that day. So they were obliged to wait till evening; for the Jewish Sabbath is over as soon as the sun sets. How they must have longed for the evening!

At last the sun went down. And after that, as quickly as possible, the streets were filled with sick people—all going one way—all going to the humble house of Peter the fisherman, where Jesus was.

The Bible says that "all the city was gathered together at the door." There were the lame and the blind; those who had bad fevers and different diseases, and many who were possessed by devils. There were many who were too ill to walk—almost dying—carried by their friends on beds, to go to Jesus.

And He healed them all. The diseases of every one were driven away, either by the touch of His pure and gentle hands, or by the sound of His holy voice.

This work of healing did not only cause fatigue and weariness to our Blessed Saviour, it also caused Him great *pain*. He saw before Him so much sorrow and suffering; and all that sorrow and suffering He shared. His heart ached with the sight of so much misery.

His love and compassion were so great, that it was as if He Himself had to bear it all. And indeed He *did* bear it all. For God's Word tells us that He took our griefs and sicknesses upon Himself; and He did much *more* than this,—He bore our sins—our vile and hateful sins—in His own body on the cross.

Can anything show us more plainly how wonderfully loving and tender our Lord is!

PHARISEE PRAYING.

But now the people had all gone home, and the tired Saviour went to rest. One would have thought He needed long rest and sleep after such a day of toil. But no!

In the morning, a great while before it became light, He got up again and went out of the house; He passed through the silent streets till He left the town far behind Him, and then He went into some lonely place,—perhaps up in the hills,—and there prayed.

This His great refreshment and His greatest rest,—to talk to His Father in heaven, to pray to Him and to praise Him.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

YOU may be sure the news of all that had happened in Capernaum on that Sabbath-day, spread quickly all over the country. Every one was talking of the great Prophet who had done such wonderful things; and people came from all the towns and villages round to see and hear Him.

When Jesus saw what a great number of people were following Him, He went up into a mountain to preach to them; for there was a place there where many thousands could hear Him at the same time.

Then He sat down, with His disciples near Him; and as all that immense crowd gathered round Him—as closely as they could, so that they might hear every word—He began to teach them.

What He taught was very different from what the Scribes and Pharisees had been accustomed to teach. In Christ's Sermon there is a great deal that you are not old enough to understand yet; but there is also a great deal that the youngest child can understand.

He began by calling those "blessed" who are humble, and do not think much of themselves; those, also, who are sorry for sin; the meek too; and those who long to be holy; the merciful and kind-hearted; the pure in heart; and the peacemakers.

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Jesus also said that those are blessed who are hated and unkindly treated because they are good, and love and fear God.

Then He said that His people must be loving and kind to all; not only to those who are gentle and loving to us, but even to those who are unkind and spiteful.

Is not this a very difficult thing to do? and could we ever do it without God's help?

Oh, no. It is only by His Holy Spirit within us, that we can ever hope to be kind and loving to those who hate us.

Think of this, dear children, whenever you are tempted to get into a passion, to strike a blow, or even to say an angry word. If you wish to be a child of your heavenly Father and a little disciple of the Lord Jesus, you will try to keep down all angry tempers, praying for God's Holy Spirit to enable you to do it.

Jesus will see it, and it will please Him.

The Saviour went on talking a great deal more to the people, and they never wearied listening to Him.

He taught them that God is a loving Father. The Jews had only thought of Him as a stern and holy God, and a righteous Judge; but Jesus told them more about Him than they had ever known before.

He told them that God is love. Much, much

more loving than even the kindest earthly parent. That God was always thinking about them, and taking care of them. He said,—

"Do not be afraid that you will not have enough to eat, or that you will not have clothes to wear. Just look at the little birds that are flying all round you! they cannot do anything to earn their living; yet your heavenly Father gives them food.

"And look at the beautiful flowers! they cannot work; and yet, even king Solomon in all his glory had no such beautiful clothing as these lovely flowers have.

"So, if God takes such care of the birds and the flowers, He will *much more* take care of *you*. Only, seek first to know and do His will, and He will give you everything that is necessary for you."

Then Jesus taught them a little prayer; and the words He used are what we call "the Lord's Prayer."

He knew that the proud Pharisees often used long prayers, just that people might think them very good; and they often prayed in the streets; for there were certain hours in the day when they said particular prayers; and if they happened to be in the streets then, they would say their prayers out in the streets, and they liked to be seen doing it.

Jesus said, "Do not be like these proud people, who pretend to be good, and are *not* good. But when you pray, go quietly into your room and shut

the door, and pray to your Father in secret; for He will see you and hear you.

"And pray in this way:—Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for Thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory for ever. Amen."

Do you know what it means, "Hallowed be thy name?" It means, "Let God's name be praised."

Trespasses, you know, mean *sins*.

After the prayer, Jesus said these solemn words:—

"If you forgive any one who has offended you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if you will not forgive any one who has offended you, your Father will not forgive your sins."

Let us always remember this, and pray God to give us loving and forgiving hearts.

Jesus finished His beautiful sermon by saying, "Every one who has heard Me, and will do as I have said, I will tell you what he is like. He is like a very wise man who built his house upon a rock: and the rain came pouring down, and a flood of water came rushing along, and a very strong wind blew: but the house did not fall: for it was firm on the rock.

"But every one who has heard Me, and will not

do as I have said, is like a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand: and the rain poured down, and the floods came, and a strong wind blew; and the house fell: and it was a very terrible fall."

Jesus Christ is the Rock. All who trust in Him are safe for ever; for He is the Saviour of all those who believe.

RUINS OF THE THEATRE OF EPHESUS.

Those who do not care for Him, and will not believe in Him or trust Him, must perish. For the Bible tells us that the wicked shall be cast into hell, and all the people who forget God.

CHAPTER XX.

THE LEPER HEALED.

THERE is no disease in the world so dreadful or so horrible as leprosy. There is no cure for it.

It often begins first as a little white spot—nothing very bad to look at—but the hearts of those who are attacked by it, ache when they see it; for they know it will spread and spread, and that they will get worse and worse, till at last they will die from it.

It is a very painful disease, too; as it spreads over the body, it seems to eat into the flesh; and gradually the fingers drop off, and the hand and arm, or perhaps the feet, begin to rot and drop off.

Sometimes little babies, and very young children, had this fearful illness; and oh, how sad to think that they could never grow up to be healthy or strong; but that this horrible leprosy would spread all over them till at last it would kill them.

There was another very sad thing about leprosy. As soon as it was known that any one had this dreadful disease, the person was never allowed to remain in his own house; he was obliged to go away and live with others who were lepers too.

He was never allowed to be with those who were healthy and well; and he was obliged to go about with his clothes torn (as a sign of mourning), with

(110) LEPERS OUTSIDE OF THE GATE.

his head bare, with his face half covered. If any one was to come near him, when he was walking out of doors, he must call out,—

"Unclean! unclean!"

And then people would shun him, and start on one side—so afraid of touching the poor miserable leper. He could never go to God's house; never go up to Jerusalem to the feast of the Passover; but he must be an outcast all his life, without any hope of ever being better—knowing, indeed, that he must get worse and worse.

There was a poor leper who had heard of Jesus, and of the wonderful things He had done; how He had made the blind to see, the lame to walk, and the deaf to hear; how He had cast out devils, and healed those who had been at the point of death.

When he heard of these things he thought to himself, "If He can do all this, He can make even me well!" And so he determined to go to Jesus, and ask to be healed.

The Lord had just finished His Sermon on the Mount, and had come down into the valley again—still followed by a great crowd of people—when this poor leper pressed forward to go to Jesus. He felt it was his only chance. If Jesus would not heal him, nobody else could. But *would* He heal a wretched leper?

The crowd moved back and made way for him, as he still pressed on; they were afraid of being

touched by the loathsome leper. At last He came to where Jesus was, and he threw Himself down at the Saviour's feet.

"Lord, if you will, you can make me clean," he cried in his great earnestness.

He was sure Jesus *could* do it; but he doubted if He *would*. How little he knew the Saviour's wonderful love, and tenderness, and compassion.

Jesus could have cured him with a word. But He was so "moved with compassion," He felt such pity for the poor leper who was shunned by everybody, and whom nobody would touch, that He put out His own pure and holy hand, and touched him, and He said,—

"I will; be thou clean."

And at that touch, in a moment the foul leprosy was gone; and his body which, just a minute before was full of the disease, was now in perfect health.

Then Jesus charged him very particularly.

"Be sure you do not tell any one what has been done; but go away now, and show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing those things that Moses has commanded."

Why did Jesus tell him not to talk of the way he had been healed?

Because there was already such a great multitude following Him, that if more were to come it would hinder Him in His work; and perhaps, also, it might make the rulers interfere.

So the man went away. But did he *obey* Jesus?

No. As he went, he began to tell every one about the miracle Jesus had done. On his way to the priest, and wherever he went, he spoke about it; and so blazed abroad the matter that Jesus could not remain in the city any longer; but was obliged to go out into lonely desert places.

However, people still came flocking after Him, from every direction.

Sin is like leprosy; and this is a disease we are all suffering from. Sin is in every one, even in little tiny children. At first it only appears like a little spot; but how soon it spreads!

Look at a young baby,—it is cross or passionate sometimes; ah! that is the spot of sin! As it grows older, other faults appear.—it is selfish, wilful, disobedient—this is the disease spreading. Then it becomes untruthful, and hardened perhaps. Ah! how sad! How can sin—this horrible sin—be cured?

We must do as the poor leper did; we must go to Jesus. He *can*, and He *will* heal us, if we will only ask Him; and He will give us His Holy Spirit to make our hearts clean.

But our hearts are so evil, and Satan is so busy—always tempting us to do, or say, or think things that are not good—that we are sinning every day. Let us then pray to Jesus every day, very earnestly, to make us clean, and to wash away all our sins in His most precious Blood.

Then, when this life is over, He will take us to be with Him for ever, in that blessed land where there is no more sorrow, or crying, or any pain; and where there is no more sin.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE CENTURION'S FAITH.

THERE lived at Capernaum a man who was rich and great. He was an officer, with command over a hundred soldiers, and he was called a centurion.

He was not a Jew, but he loved the Jews; and since he had lived amongst them he had learned to know the true God. While he was at Capernaum, he built a synagogue with his own money; and he was so kind and good that the Jews loved him, though he belonged to another nation,—and this was a thing they very seldom did.

This centurion had a servant whom he loved very much; and the servant was ill,—so ill that he was "ready to die."

His master was greatly distressed; but he had heard of Jesus, and from all he had heard, he was quite sure that He was the Son of God. Yes; Jesus could help him, he knew quite well, and so he

would send a messenger to Him, to beg Him to heal his servant.

But why did he not go himself? Did he think himself too grand to go to a poor man—as Jesus was—even though He was a Prophet?

No; that was not the reason. It was because he was so humble-minded,—because he thought so little of himself. He is the only man we read of in the Bible, who thought himself unworthy to go and speak to Jesus himself. He was a Gentile (all people who are not Jews were called Gentiles); and he thought that this was another reason why he was not a fit person to go to the holy Prophet of Nazareth.

So the centurion went to the elders of the Jews, and begged them to go to Jesus, and to tell Him about the sick servant, and ask Him to make him well.

The Jewish elders were quite willing to do this for the centurion; for, as I have just told you, they all liked him so much.

They went, therefore, to the Saviour, and prayed Him very earnestly to come and heal the sick man. They told Jesus whose servant he was; and then they said that the centurion was quite worthy to have this kindness done for him, because he loved the Jews, and had built them a synagogue.

The elders seemed to think that if Jesus came, it would only be because of their pleading! They did

not know about His wonderful love and compassion; and that He was always ready to heal all who were sick, even if neither they, nor those who asked Him, were worthy of the blessing.

The Lord answered the messengers at once, and so kindly,—

"I will come and hêal him," He said.

So He went with the elders. But as He was on His way, and was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying,

"Lord, do not trouble yourself to come; for I am not worthy to have you in my house, nor did I think myself worthy to come to you; but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed."

When Jesus heard this, He marvelled,—that means, He was greatly surprised. He turned round and said to all the people who were following Him,—

"Truly I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."

Even His own disciples had not shown so much faith in their Lord as this humble-minded stranger —this Gentile—had done.

Jesus went on to say that many believing people should come from other nations, and sit down in the kingdom of heaven; and that many unbelieving Jews should not see heaven, but be cast out in outer darkness.

These were not pleasant words for the elders to

hear. They thought that the Jews were sure of heaven; and that the Gentiles, whom they despised so much, would be the outcasts. They did not understand that it was faith, such as the centurion had —faith in the Lord Jesus—that would give them the right to enter in, whether Jew or Gentile.

AN ORIENTAL AT PRAYER.

Then Jesus sent this answer to the centurion, by the messengers,—

"As you have believed, so be it done unto you."

The friends who had been sent, returned then to the centurion's house; and they found that the servant who had been so dangerously ill, was now quite well. Christ's word had healed him.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE WIDOW OF NAIN.

TWENTY-FIVE miles from Capernaum, there was a little town called Nain. Nain means "Fair," and it was given this name because it was so prettily

(118) RAISING THE SON OF THE WIDOW OF NAIN.

situated,—perched high up against the side of a sloping mountain.

But one day there was sorrow—great sorrow in the pretty little town. A poor mother was crying bitterly; for her deer son was dead, and she was alone now.

She was a widow—which means that her husband was dead—and now her only son had just died! How sad for her!

The very day he died, he was to be buried. His body was to be laid in a quiet grave outside the city walls. A great many people were with the poor unhappy mother. They knew about her great sorrow; and they wanted to show her how much they felt for her, and how gladly they would have comforted her if they could.

And so the solemn procession left the widow's house. There were men carrying the dead body on a sort of wooden couch, called a bier, and all the mourners followed it.

I dare say you have often seen a funeral procession passing along the road, or street. You have seen, perhaps, some poor father, or mother, or daughter, or sister, crying very much as they were following their darling child, or parent, or brother, or sister to the grave; but everything was very quiet, and the tears shed were silent tears.

It is quite different, however, in that country of which I am telling you. There it is the custom to

make loud cries of mourning and distress; to weep violently and noisily, to make a sound of wailing and great lamentation, so that people a long way off could hear.

The sad procession had passed through the streets of Nain, and had just got outside the gate of the city, when another procession—a glad and joyous one—was seen coming up the steep and rocky path which led to the town.

Who were they?

It was Jesus followed by His disciples and a great crowd of people, who had accompanied Him all the way from Capernaum. On they came, climbing slowly up the narrow stony path, till they were quite close to the men who were carrying the dead man on the bier.

Jesus saw the poor mother crying very much; He knew how sad her heart was, for he knew all her story; and He knew how much she had loved her boy. His own great heart was sad to see her sorrow; He felt great pity for her (for the heart of Jesus is more tender and loving than any other human heart), and He wanted to dry her tears.

"Weep not," He said to the poor widow, with wonderful love and pity in His voice.

And then He went to the coffin and touched it; and the men who were carrying it stood still.

Jesus did not tell them to stop; but there was something about Him that filled them with respect

and awe; and at His touch they waited, in silent wonder, to see what He would do.

And what did He do?

He spoke to the dead man, and said, "Young man, I say to you, get up."

But could the dead man hear?

Yes. when JESUS spoke; for the dead can hear the voice of the Son of God, and all who hear shall live.

And so it was with the widow's son. At the words of Jesus life came back into the dead man's body; he began to breathe again; then he sat up and began to speak.

And Jesus gave him to his mother.

Oh, happy mother! What must she have felt when she saw her dear son restored to life again? Surely she must have loved the Lord who had been so loving and gracious to her.

And what did the people feel when they saw this miracle, so much more wonderful than anything they had ever heard of before?

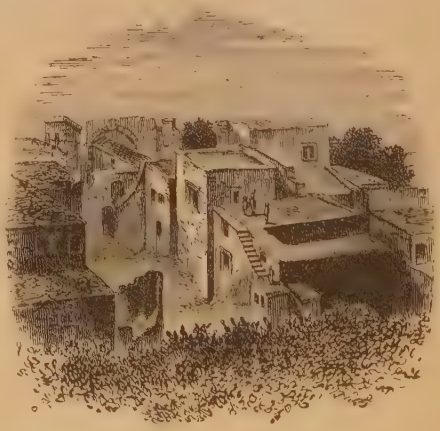
The Bible tells us that a great fear came on them all. Some of them felt sure that God had indeed come to them, in the person of His Son; and others thought that He was a great prophet. And they praised God.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE PALSIED MAN HEALED.

ONCE more Jesus was home again—back in "His own city," Capernaum; and the news of His arrival spread quickly over the little town. The people were very glad to have Him amongst them once more. He had done so much for them—He had healed so many, and had done so many miracles—that when they knew He had returned, they gathered out of every house, in crowds, to go and see and hear Him.

I suppose Jesus must have been staying in Simon Peter's house, as He had done before; and such a great number of people came to Him there, that there was no room to receive them. Even the doorway was blocked up with eager faces.



OUTSIDE STAIRCASE.

And Jesus taught them out of the Scriptures, preaching "the word" to them.

While they were there, listening very attentively,

four men came up the street carrying a sort of couch, or bed, made of mats, or a piece of carpet, and on this little bed was a poor sick man. He was sick of the palsy, and very ill; he had lost the use of his limbs, and was quite helpless, not able to do anything for himself. So his friends were bringing him to Jesus to be made well.

They tried to get in at the door of the room where Jesus was; but it was so crowded with people, they found it impossible to push their way through.

What were they to do? The poor sick man wished to see the Saviour so much; for though he wanted to be made well, he wanted a great deal more to have his sins forgiven; and he believed that Jesus was the Son of God, and that He could forgive all that he had done wrong.

At last his friends thought of a way by which he might reach Jesus. But before I tell you what they did, I must explain to you something about the house.

In that country where Jesus was, the houses are not made with sloping roofs, as they are with us. The houses are low, and the roofs are quite flat, so that people may walk about on them; and the way up to the roof is by a staircase outside the house.

Now I will tell you what the four men did. They carried their sick friend up this outside staircase, on to the roof. Then they made a hole in the roof, by taking up some of the tiles; and when they had

made it large enough, they let down the little bed, with the sick man on it, just in the very place where Jesus was.

The Lord was pleased with what they had done. He saw that they believed in His power and love—that they had faith in Him—and this made Him glad; for without faith it is impossible to please God.

Jesus knew that the poor sick man was caring more for the healing of his *soul* than of his *body;* and therefore He gave him first the blessing he was so greatly longing for. He spoke to him very tenderly, and called him "son."

"Son, be of good cheer—be happy," He said; "your sins are forgiven."

All the people wondered greatly to hear Him speak like this. They quite expected to see Him make the sick man well, for they had often known Him to heal those who were ill; but they had never heard Him speak in this way before, and some among them were very angry.

"Why does this man speak like this?" they thought to themselves; "it is only God who can forgive sins."

Jesus knew what they were thinking about; He could read their hearts, and so He said to them,—

"Why are you angry? Which is the easier to say, Your sins are forgiven, or to say, Get up and walk? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power to forgive sins," (then He turned to

the sick man, and said), "I say to you Arise, take up your bed, and go away to your house."

And that minute the poor sick man was made well! He got up at once, rolled up the mat on which he had been lying, and put it under his arm; and then, as the people made way for him to pass out, he went away before them all, quite well and strong, and praising God for His goodness.

If the people were surprised before, they were much more astonished now.

They seemed at last to understand a little that Jesus really was God, and this made them afraid. But they praised God too; and as they were talking about it amongst themselves, they said,—

"We have seen strange things to-day; we have never seen anything like this before."

RUINS OF CHORAZIN.

CHAPTER XXIV.

MORE MIRACLES OF HEALING.

IT was just about this time—when Jesus was doing all the wonderful things of which I have been telling you—that He chose another disciple to be always with Him, and to be His friend. His name was Matthew.

Jesus saw Him one day as he was sitting at his usual business—collecting money for the king; and He said to him, "Follow Me."

Now Matthew, besides getting money for the king, was also getting a great deal of money for himself; so do you think it was likely that he would leave his riches for the sake of following a prophet as poor as Jesus was?

I think he must have learned to know and love the Lord Jesus during all that time he had been at Capernaum; for when the Saviour called him, he got up at once, left all his riches and his money-making, and followed Him.

Matthew was so thankful and happy at Jesus having chosen him to be a disciple that he made a great feast in his house, and invited his new Master to it, and all his own friends.

And who were his friends? Were they some of the good and respectable people of the town?

No; the friends of Matthew were sinners; people who were not respectable; who had not good characters, and who had led bad and naughty lives. Matthew himself had been like these people once; but he was changed now, for God had put His Holy Spirit in his heart. *Soon* Matthew would have other friends—those who loved and served his Master—but as yet these were all the friends he had.

Would Jesus, however, sit down to table with sinners like these?

Yes; He would, and He did. It was a strange company at that feast! the Holy Jesus and His faithful disciples, sitting down with wicked men and sinful women.

When the proud Pharisees saw it, they were very much displeased. *They* would not eat and drink with such people; they thought themselves much too holy and good. So they complained about it to His disciples.

"Why does your Master eat with wicked people like these?" they asked.

Jesus heard what they said, and He gave them this answer,—

"People only want a doctor when they are ill; and sinners only want a Saviour when they are sorry for their sins. I am come to speak to sinners, and to make them sorry for their naughtiness."

The feast was scarcely ended, and Jesus was still teaching them as they sat round the table, when one

of the rulers of the synagogue came in, with great haste.

His name was Jairus; and he was in such grief! There, before all the publicans and sinners, he threw himself down at the feet of Jesus, and said,—

"My little daughter is lying at the point of death —she is almost dead—but come and lay your hands upon her, and she shall live."

Jesus got up at once to go with the poor father; and His disciples followed Him, and so did a great number of people. As He went along, still more people came crowding round Him; for they knew that He was going to the ruler's house, to make his little girl—his only daughter—well.

Amongst the crowd there was a poor sick woman who had been ill a great number of years. She had gone to a great many different doctors, and they had all tried to cure her; but she had got no better; indeed, she had become *more* ill. And now she had spent all her money, and did not know what to do.

As she saw Jesus passing along that day, a sudden thought came into her mind. She said to herself,—

"I will try and touch Him; for I know that if I can only just touch the hem of His garment, I shall be well."

It was not an easy thing for her to touch the Lord Jesus, because of the great crowd that was round Him; and, besides, she was so weak and ill.

9 RAISING THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS. (129)

But she did so long to get to Him, that she tried hard to force her way through. At last she succeeded. She got behind Him, put out her hand, just touched the Master's robe—at that moment she was cured.

Though her touch was so gentle, Jesus felt it. He looked round and said,—

"Who touched My clothes?"

Peter answered a little impatiently, "Master, you see how all the people are pressing against you, so why do you ask if any one has touched you?"

But Jesus knew that it was the hand of *faith* that had touched Him—that some one who believed in Him had got a blessing from Him—so He replied.

"Somebody *has* touched Me."

Then the Lord looked round at the people's faces, to find out who it was who had done this thing.

And now the poor woman, knowing that she could not be hid, came frightened and trembling, and fell down at Jesus' feet, and told Him all the truth. She told Him how ill she had been, and how no one could make her better; how she had struggled to get through the crowd just to touch Him, and how, directly she had done so, she was made perfectly well.

When He had listened to her story, the gentle Saviour spoke very tenderly to her.

"Daughter," he said, "be of good cheer. It was your faith in Me that made you well. Go in peace."

How happy she was as she returned to her own house, feeling so well and strong. For twelve years she had been ill. Was not that a long time to be so suffering?

But oh! how poor Jairus must have been longing, all this time, for Jesus to be with his sick child. And now they all move on again. But just at this moment a messenger came to the ruler to say,—

"Your daughter is dead; don't worry the Master to come now."

Jesus heard these words; and at once He tried to comfort the poor father by saying,—

"Do not be afraid; only believe."

So they went to the house; and Jesus would not let any one follow Him in, except Peter, and James, and John.

I told you, that when any one died in that country, there was always a great noise of crying and lamenting; and so it was when Jesus entered the ruler's house. People were tearing their hair and beating their breasts, and weeping out loud to show their sorrow.

Jesus said to them, "Why do you make this noise, and weep? the little girl is not dead, she is only sleeping."

He said she was asleep, because He was going to bring her to life again so quickly. But when the mourners heard Him say this, they mocked and laughed at Him.

After this, Jesus would not let them stay in the house. He put them all out; for they were not the *real* mourners—they were paid to make this show of grief.

Then Jesus took the father and mother of the little girl, and His three disciples, and they all went quietly and solemnly into the room where the dead child was.

Jesus went up to the little bed on which she was lying; He took the small cold hand in His own, and said,—

"Little maid, get up."

And her spirit came into her again and she got up and walked.

Her parents were greatly astonished; they seemed as if they scarcely could believe it was true. And while they were looking in amazement, Jesus told them to give her something to eat.

He also desired them not to talk about the wonderful miracle He had just done.

The little girl was just twelve years old: old enough to understand how good the Lord Jesus had been in giving her back to the parents who loved her so dearly. And I think she must have loved the Saviour after that; and must always have tried to do what would please Him.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE CRIPPLE AT BETHESDA.

ONCE, again, there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Do you remember what He had done when last He was in that city? how He had turned out of the Temple all those who were dishonoring God by buying and selling there? And do you also remember how angry the rulers were with Him? and how much they disliked Him?

That was just one year ago; and now He was come back again.

There was at Jerusalem, a very wonderful pool of water called Bethesda—which means House of Mercy. Round this pool there were five porches, or door-ways; and in these lay a great many sick people. Some of them were lame, some were blind, and some had the palsy.

What were they there for? I will tell you.

The water in the pool was generally quiet and still; but every now and then, there was a strange movement in it; it bubbled up, and gurgled, in a very mysterious way. Whenever this happened, there was a wonderful healing power in the water; so that the first person who went into it afterwards, was made well of whatever disease he had.

No wonder that so many sick people were lying there; they were waiting for that strange movement and bubbling, so that they might step quickly into the water and be made well.

It was the Sabbath-day, and Jesus went to the Pool of Bethesda. And He saw there a poor man who had an illness for a great many years; it began before Jesus was born; and he was a cripple. He had

POOL OF BETHESDA.

not been a good man; and this terrible illness was caused by some sin he had committed thirty-eight years before.

As the Saviour looked at him, He felt great pity for him; for He knew all about him—knew all about the sin and the many long years of suffering.

"Would you like to be made well?" Jesus asked him.

The sick man answered, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is troubled: but while I am trying to get down, some one else steps in before me."

I dare say he thought that the stranger who looked so kindly and so pityingly at him, would help him to get down into the water, when next it should be troubled. But instead of that, what did Jesus say to him?

Still looking at the poor cripple, who had not been able to walk for such a number of years, He said,—

"Rise, take up your bed, and walk."

What a wonderful power there was in the voice of Jesus! As soon as He had spoken, strength and health came into the sick man's diseased and feeble body. He got up at once, and walked away, carrying in his arms the mat, or bed, on which he had been lying.

He was still walking on, when some of the rulers met him; and they spoke to him angrily.

"It is the Sabbath day," they said; "it is not right of you to carry your bed."

The man who had been made well answered, "He that healed me, *He* told me to take up my bed, and walk."

Then they asked him, "Who was it that told you to do such a wrong thing as to take up your bed, and walk?"

But this was a question the man could not answer; for he did not know who it was, as Jesus had gone away from the pool directly He had made the sick man well.

After this Jesus saw him in the temple. I suppose he had gone there to thank God for His goodness to Him. But the Lord saw that he had need of warning, and so He went to speak to him.

"See, you are made well: do not sin any more, for fear a worse thing should happen to you."

The man now knew who it was that had saved him from a life of misery, and had given him his health again.

Did he feel grateful to Him? I think his heart must have been very hard and very bad; for though he knew how angry the Jewish rulers were, at—what they called—the breaking of the Sabbath, yet he went straight from the temple, to tell them that it was Jesus who had made him well!

You remember, I told you that the Jews kept the Sabbath very strictly. They thought it very wicked for any one to carry even a little parcel on that day and to carry a bed, they considered a great sin They even thought it wrong for any sick person to go to a doctor to be cured on God's holy day.

As soon, then, as they knew that it was Jesus who had healed the cripple, and had afterwards told him to carry his bed, they were exceedingly angry. They disliked Him before,—but they hated Him

now; and from this time began to think how they might find an opportunity to kill Him.

Is it not wonderful, and sad, that people could have been so wicked and so cruel?

The chief priests spoke to Jesus, and accused Him of Sabbath-breaking, and of not honoring God's day.

But Jesus told them that God was His Father; and that it was God Himself who had helped Him to do all these miracles.

This made them still more angry; and made them now quite determined that they would kill Him one day, because He said that God was His Father, and so made Himself equal with God.

Jesus went on to speak to them solemnly. He said, "My Father loves me; and has given Me power, even to raise the dead to life again; that all men should honour Me, even as they honour My Father. I do not seek My own will; it is My Father's will, I always do. But I know you, that you have not the love of God in you."

Yes, that was the secret of the Jews' hatred of Jesus. They were very careful to obey God in certain things; but they did not love Him. Their hearts were not right with Him. They thought themselves holy; and yet they had murder in their hearts.

Let us always pray God to make our hearts clean; and to make us love Him better every day, for His dear Son's sake.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE PHARISEE AND THE SINNER.

THE life of Jesus was no longer safe in Jerusalem. The chief priests and rulers hated Him bitterly, and were so anxious to kill Him, that Jesus determined to return to Galilee for another year; and to go on as He had done, teaching, preaching, healing and blessing wherever He went.

Yet He would go back to the Holy City again; and later, when it should be His Father's time, He would *die* there! He knew this quite well. But His work of mercy was not done yet; and so He returned to Capernaum.

But it grieved Jesus to the heart, that even in the cities round the beautiful Lake of Gennesareth, where most of His mighty works were done, the people were unbelieving and unrepentant. Though they saw Him do things that only God could do, they would not believe in Him; and though they listened to his teaching (as no *man* could teach them), yet they were not sorry for their sins.

But our blessed Lord rejoiced in spirit over the little band of faithful followers, who believed in, and loved Him; and He praised God because He had put His Holy Spirit in their hearts.

He said, "I thank you, O Father, Lord of Heaven,

and earth, because though you have hidden these things from those who are proud, and think them-

SEA OF GALILEE.

selves wise, yet you have shown them to those who are simple and humble. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in your sight."

Then Jesus spoke such loving, tender words, to all those who are troubled, and sorry for sin.

"Come unto Me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."

One of the Pharisees at Capernaum, invited Jesus to dine with him.

Why did he ask Jesus? He did not love Him; but he had heard of all the wonderful things He had done, and he wanted to see Him, and to hear Him talk.

The proud Pharisee had invited a great many other people too, to his dinner; and as they came into the room, Simon—that was the Pharisee's name—kissed them and spoke pleasantly to them; and servants came and washed their feet, and put oil on their heads, for this was always the custom in that country.

Then Jesus came into the room. And do you not think the Pharisee would do all he could to show special honour to his holy guest? because, though he did not *love* Jesus, yet he knew that He was a great prophet.

But no; for the blessed Saviour there was no kiss, no washing of the feet, no oil. Simon thought it was quite honour enough to ask Him to the house;

THE SINFUL WOMAN FORGIVEN. (141)

and so he showed Him none of the kindnesses that the other guests received.

At last they were all assembled, and the feast began. The people did not sit on chairs, as we do, but they lay on couches round the table.

Presently a woman, who had led a very sinful life, came into the room. She was well known in the city as being a wicked woman; but now she was sorry for her naughtiness, and she wanted so much to be better.

She knew that Jesus had gone to dine in the Pharisee's house, and so she followed Him there. Perhaps she had heard His loving words, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." She felt her sins to be a heavy burden, and she believed that He could give her the rest—the pardon and peace—He had promised.

And now she came behind Him weeping—crying for her naughtiness—and her tears fell fast on the Saviour's feet. With her long hair she wiped His feet, and then she kissed them, and put some sweet ointment on them, which she had brought with her in a box.

The Pharisee saw it all, and was displeased. *He* would never have allowed such a sinner to touch *him*, and he wondered that Jesus permitted it; but then he thought, perhaps Jesus did not know who she was.

He said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, He would have known about this woman's naughty life."

Did Jesus know? Yes, far better than Simon himself could do. And He knew, too, how deeply she sorrowed for all she had done wrong; how she hated her evil ways, and how firmly resolved she was to try and lead for the future, a pure and blameless life.

PHARISEE AND PUBLICAN AT PRAYER.

Jesus not only knew about the woman, but He also knew exactly what the Pharisee was thinking about; so He said to him,—

"Simon, I have something to say to you."

The Pharisee replied, "Master, say on."

Jesus said, "There were two men who owed another man some money. One of them only owed him a small sum but the other owed him a very great deal of money. However, neither of them could pay anything at all, and so the man freely forgave them both. Now, which of these two men would love him most?"

Simon answered, "I suppose he to whom he forgave most."

Jesus said, "You have rightly judged."

Then Jesus turned to the weeping, penitent woman, and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house, and you gave Me no water for my feet; but she has washed My feet with tears, and wiped them with her hair. You gave Me no kiss; but this woman has never ceased to kiss My feet ever since I came in. You put no oil upon My head; but this woman has anointed My feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto you, her sins —her many sins—are forgiven; and that is why she loves so much; but those who have only been forgiven a little, the same love little."

What must Simon have felt when he heard these words? And what must the poor woman have felt when Jesus turned to her again, and said,—

"Your sins are forgiven."

Ah! had not the blessed Saviour kept His promise? She had gone to Him troubled and heavy laden, and He had indeed given her rest.

But the people who sat round the table began to say in their hearts, "Who is this that forgives sins also?"

Once more Jesus spoke to the woman, and sent her away with kind words,—

"Your *faith* has saved you; go in peace."

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE MAN WITH THE WITHERED HAND.

I CAN scarcely make you understand how terrible a burden the Sabbath had become, under the teaching of the Jewish rabbis.

God had ordained that one day in seven should be kept holy, and He intended it as a rest and a blessing to both body and soul. But the Pharisees had made a great many hard rules about it, which God had never made; and Jesus wanted to teach them what it was that His Father really required.

But the Pharisees did not wish to be taught, and nothing made them so angry with our blessed Lord as to see that He did not approve of their foolish, wearisome, burdensome laws.

I will tell you what a few of these laws were.

A tailor must not have a needle about him on the Sabbath.

Shoes with nails in them must not be worn on the Sabbath.

A flea must not be killed on the Sabbath.

No fire must be lit, no food cooked, no sick healed, or comforted, on the Sabbath.

Was this what God meant, when He said that the Sabbath should be a delight, and holy to the Lord? Surely not.

So Jesus wanted to take off some of this terrible burden which was pressing so heavily on the poor. For the Pharisees were very hard upon those who did not know or could not remember all their many rules.

One Sabbath day Jesus went through the corn-fields. And as His disciples followed Him, they began to pluck the ears of corn and to eat, for they were very hungry.

The Pharisees, who were always now on the look-out for something to find fault about, at once said to Jesus,—

"See, why do your disciples do that which is not lawful to do on the Sabbath day?"

Jesus patiently answered their angry question and fault-finding. He told them that His disciples were not doing wrong in satisfying their hunger on the Sabbath; and that it was not wrong to do things on that day that were necessary to be done.

"The Sabbath was made for man," the Saviour said; "made to be a blessing and a help to him; and the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day."

Then Jesus went on, and entered into one of their synagogues, and taught. And there was a man there who had a withered hand—he could not use it at all—and the proud Pharisees watched Jesus, to see if He would heal the poor man's hand, for they wanted to accuse Him.

Yes, Jesus would do His work of love and mercy

in spite of the hardness of their hearts and their angry looks.

So He said to the man, "Rise up, and stand forth in the midst."

And the man got up and stood in the middle of them all.

Then Jesus turned to the Pharisees, and said, "I will ask you one question: Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill?"

But they were silent. They did not know how to answer Him.

And when He had looked round on them with anger, being grieved that their hearts were so hard, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand."

And he stretched it out, and his hand was made perfectly well, just like the other.

The Pharisees, when they saw it, were filled with madness. They were not a bit glad that the poor man had the use of his hand again. They thought nothing of the wonderful miracle Jesus had just done. They did not really care at all for God's honour. They were only furious because Jesus had not followed their own foolish rules.

So now the Pharisees at Capernaum hated Jesus just as much as the Pharisees at Jerusalem had done; and as soon as they went out of the synagogue they began to consult together how they might kill Him.

But when Jesus knew it, He went away from them for a little while, till some of their angry feelings should pass away. He knew that He must be killed at last; but the time was not come yet.

And the great multitudes followed Him; and He healed them all.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

JESUS CHOOSES THE TWELVE APOSTLES.

IT came to pass in those days, that Jesus went up into a mountain to pray; and He remained all night in prayer to God.

Just think of this, dear children; all night long He was praying to His Father in heaven! Must He not have loved His Father very much? and must He not have found it His sweetest occupation, and His greatest *rest*, to be speaking to Him?

This is what *we* should feel when we kneel in prayer to our Father in heaven; but how often we find it a weariness! And yet He loves us, in spite of all our coldness; and He cares for us more than we can ever understand, in spite of all our shortcomings. Let us pray that we may love *Him* more.

After this night of prayer, as soon as it was day, Jesus called to Him His disciples. And a great many came to Him; for there were many who loved

and followed Him. They listened to His words, and tried to learn the lessons of wisdom, and gentleness, and peace, He taught them; and so they were His disciples.

And now from this little band of faithful followers Jesus chose twelve, who were to be something more than disciples; they were to be apostles too. The word apostle means, one sent—a messenger—and Jesus was going to send them forth as missionaries, to give His message to sinners, and to preach as He had done.

The names of the twelve Apostles are these:—Simon Peter and Andrew; James and John; Philip and Bartholomew; Matthew and Thomas; another James, and another Simon; and Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor.

By two and two, Jesus would in a short time send the Apostles away. And He gave them power over all devils and evil spirits, and to cure diseases. And Jesus commanded them, saying,—

"As you go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils. Give freely to others the blessings I have given to you so freely."

Then Jesus told them not to expect that they would always be well received. As people had hated and persecuted the Master, they would be sure to hate and persecute His servants.

"But do not be afraid of those who can only kill your body," Jesus said; "fear only Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Look at the little sparrows; your Father cares for them. So do not be afraid, for you are of more value than many sparrows. And even the hairs of your head are all numbered."

But the Apostles were not to go away immediately. They were to remain a little while with Jesus first, that their Master might train them yet more perfectly for the work He intended them to do, Seven of them, as you know, had already been with Him, and kept closely to Him; but now all of the twelve were to do so.

The same day that Jesus had chosen the twelve Apostles, a man was brought to Him who had a devil, and who was also blind and dumb. When Jesus saw him, He had pity on the poor man who was so greatly afflicted, and He cast out the devil, and healed the man, so that he could both see and speak.

All the people were amazed—that means, greatly astonished—and some of them said, "Is not this the Messiah?"

But when the Scribes and Pharisees heard of it, they said, "This fellow casts out devils by Satan's help; He has Himself an evil spirit in Him."

How could they dare to speak like this of the Holy Saviour? For though they did not believe

Him to be the Son of God, they knew that He was a great Prophet.

Jesus told them that He had cast out devils by the finger of God; and He warned them that they were in danger of being cast into hell, if they spoke evil of that Holy Spirit of God which was in Him; for unless the Holy Spirit should work in their own hard hearts, they could never enter heaven!

Such a multitude of people had been with Him all day, that He and His disciples had no time even so much as to eat bread.

Now His mother and His brethren, when they heard of all this—and when they knew, too, what the Scribes and the Pharisees were saying of Him—were greatly distressed. They said,—

"He must be out of His mind to act like this."

And they went out to try and take Him away, and to keep Him quiet, and out of danger.

I think Mary's faith in Jesus must have become very weak! If she had still believed truly that He was the Son of God, could she ever have thought He was mad—beside Himself— or that He needed her care and protection?

So His mother and His brethren came to the house where Jesus was. But there was such a crowd round Him, and they could not get in. Then they sent some one to call Him out to them.

And the multitude sat round about Him; and

some one said to Him; "Your mother and your brethren are outside, waiting to speak to you."

And He said to the man that told Him, "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?"

Then Jesus looked round on those who sat about Him, and He stretched forth His hand towards His disciples and said,—

"Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother."

CHAPTER XXIX.

A PARABLE, AND THE STORM AT SEA.

WHAT busy days those were which Jesus spent on earth! How much He did for others, and how little rest He gave Himself.

I have told you something of what He did the day after that long night of prayer to God; how He called together all His disciples, and chose from among them the twelve; how he healed the man who was blind and dumb, and had a devil; how He went into a house and taught; how the Scribes and Pharisees came and insulted Him there; and how His mother and His brethren came to try and take Him away, because they thought He was mad to go

on in this way, and to make the Pharisees so angry with him.

But the day was not nearly over, yet; and the Saviour's work was not ended. After He had been teaching the people in the house, He went out and sat down by the seaside.

The Lake of Gennesareth was sometimes called the Sea of Galilee; and it was down on the shore of this beautiful lake that Jesus went now. As soon as the people saw Him they began to collect in great numbers again; and such crowds came round Him, that the Saviour got into a boat, and spoke to them from there, while the whole multitude stood on the shore.

And now Jesus began to teach them in quite a different way to what He had done before. He told them little stories, which had a meaning in them; but the meaning was often difficult to find out. This is called teaching by parables.

And so, on this day, while the people all stood at the edge of the water, waiting to hear His words, Jesus spoke to them by a parable. He said,—

"A man went to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some of the seed fell out on the pathway; and it was trodden on, and the birds came and ate it.

"And some fell on a rock; and as soon as it began to grow, it withered and died, because there was not enough earth.

"And some fell among thorns; and the thorns

grew up so strong and quickly, that they spoilt the good seed, by preventing the air and the sun getting to it; so it never bore any fruit.

"And some fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bore a great quantity of fruit."

This was the parable. And when the disciples were alone with Jesus again, they asked Him,—

"Why do you speak to the people in parables?"

"Because they do not really care for me or my words; and so it is useless to tell them secrets about heavenly things. But with you—my disciples—it is different; and I will explain everything to you which you do not understand."

THE SOWER.

Then the disciples asked Him, saying,—"What is the meaning of this parable?"

Jesus said, "The seed is the word of God; and the place where it is sown is in people's hearts. Those by the wayside, are people with hard, cold hearts. They have heard God's message to them, but they do not care for it; and Satan comes, and makes them forget all about it.

"Those on the rock, are people who like, very

much to hear about God. But they do not take any trouble to do what He says, and after a little while they cease to care for Him.

"Those amongst the thorns, are people who have heard the word, and think it very good. But they care so much more for riches and pleasures, than for heavenly things,—or else they are so very busy, or so much worried,—they have no time to give to God.

"But those on the good ground, are people, whose hearts are honest and true. They love God; they love to hear His word; they seek to know His will; and all their lives they try to walk in His ways."

Jesus spoke more parables to the people that day; and always, when they were alone, He explained everything to His disciples.

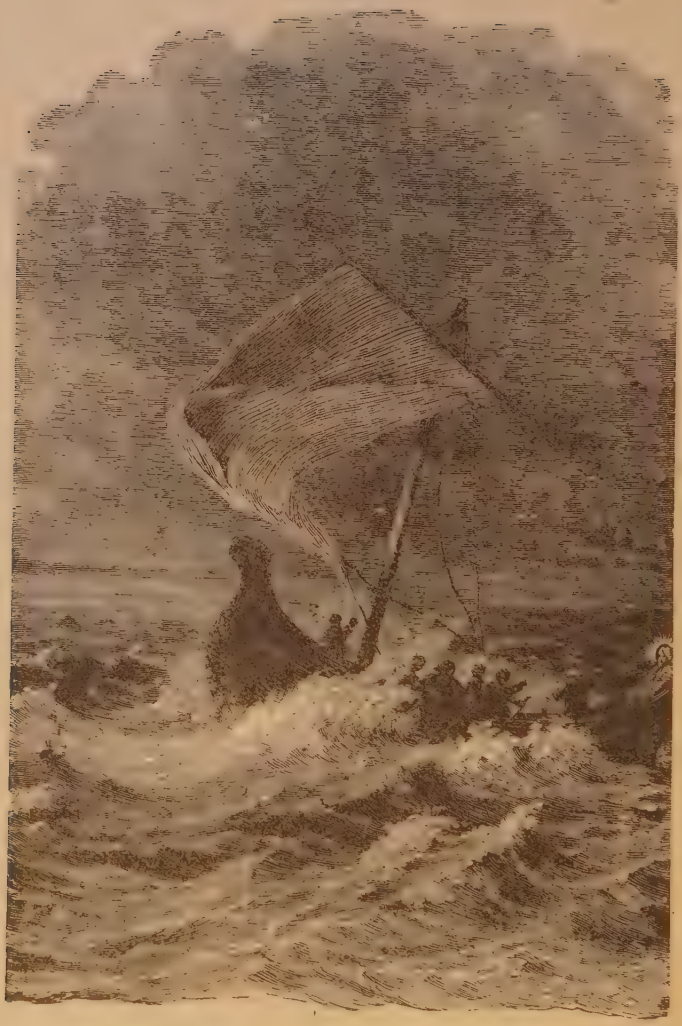
At last this long day had come to an end. It was evening, and Jesus said to His disciples,—

"Let us go over to the other side of the lake."

The Saviour was very tired now. He had been going about, teaching and preaching, ever since the early morning; and He wanted to get some rest and quiet, away from all the crowds that were so continually following on His footsteps.

So the disciples quickly got their boat ready; and, just as He was, without any preparation or waiting to take food, He took His place in it; and the little vessel put out from shore.

They had not sailed far, when the wearied Saviour fell fast asleep. He had gone to the hinder



(156) "LORD, SAVE US, WE PERISH."

part of the boat; and there, with His head resting on a pillow, He had lain down quite tired out.

The sea was smooth and calm when they first started; but before long a change came on. The wind began to blow and howl, and the waves began to rise and toss themselves about. The disciples tried hard to get across to the other side of the lake, before the storm should get worse; but the wind got more fierce and stormy, and the waves dashed up against the boat, and all over the boat, and they were dreadfully frightened.

And Jesus—where was He? Still peacefully sleeping; He was so *very* tired. Though the foam and spray dashed over Him; though the wind roared, and the boat was tossed up and down—sometimes being almost buried under the waves—yet it never woke Him.

It was a terrible tempest. And when at last the boat was nearly full of water, and in danger of sinking to the bottom, the disciples, in wild alarm, awoke the sleeping Saviour.

"Master, Master, save us! we shall die!"

Jesus rose at once, at the sound of their terrified cry. *He* was not frightened at the hurricane; and He wondered that His disciples, who had been so much with Him, should fear when *He* was with them.

"Why are you so much afraid? How is it you have no faith?" He gently said to them.

Then He stood up, in that rocking, trembling, half-filled boat, and He rebuked the wind, and said to the sea,—

"Peace, be still!"

And immediately the wind ceased, the waves were quiet, and there was a great calm.

But the disciples feared exceedingly, and said one to another:—"What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?"

That night upon the Sea of Galilee showed the disciples so plainly that their Lord was both God and man.

The great weariness and fatigue He felt proved that He was man.

His power over the wind and sea proved that He was God.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE DEMONIAC HEALED.

IT was the bright early morning, after that wild, stormy night, when Jesus had stilled the wind and the sea by a word. The little vessel had passed safely over to the other side of the lake, into the country of the Gergesenes, and Jesus and His disciples had gone on shore.

But who was this that came rushing down upon

them, directly they had landed? Could this be a *man?*

"Yes; a man "possessed with a devil." It was a sad sight.

He was so wild and fierce that every one was afraid of him; and people did not dare to pass by that way. He lived in some of the cavern tombs—holes in the rocks where people had been buried many years before—and he never wore any clothes.

Poor wretched man! there was no way of taking care of him; no one could show him any kindness; and there he lived all alone, tormented by the evil spirit that was in him. And always day and night, he was in the mountains and in the tombs; crying, and cutting himself with stones.

For a long time he had been in this miserable state; and there was no hope of his ever being better.

Often the people who lived in the city near, had caught him, and bound him with chains and fetters. But he was so strong, that he had always broken the fetters and chains in pieces, and had got away from his captors again.

How dreadful to think of any one being in that state!

I dare say he had been watching the boat coming nearer and nearer to the shore, that morning; and now, the moment that Jesus had put His foot on shore. the poor naked demoniac ran headlong down the hill to meet Him.

And what did he do when he got to Jesus? He fell down and worshipped Him. Was it not strange?

Though this poor man had never seen the Saviour before, he knew quite well who He was. The devil that was in him, knew; the devils know the Son of God, and they tremble before Him.

When Jesus saw him, He said, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit."

But the man cried out with a loud voice, saying: "What have I to do with you, Jesus, Son of the most high God? In God's name I implore you not to torment me."

Then the Lord questioned the man. He said, "What is your name?"

He answered, "My name is Legion, for we are many."

Legion means, a great number; and the man meant that many devils had entered into him.

Now there was, a good way off—near the mountains—a great many swine, or pigs, feeding. And the devils begged Jesus very earnestly that He would not send them back to hell. They said,

"If you cast us out of the man, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine."

And Jesus said to them, "Go."

So the evil spirits went out of the man, and entered into the swine; and the whole herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and were

drowned. There were about two thousand of them.

When the men who looked after the pigs saw what had happened, they were frightened. They ran away as quickly as they could, and told the wonderful news in the city and in the country: they told how the devils had gone out of the wild demoniac, into the swine; and how the whole herd was drowned.

A great many of the people came out of the city, when they had heard this strange story. They went to meet Jesus; and when they came to Him, what did they see?

There was the man, of whom they had been so much afraid, a demoniac no longer; he was sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind. And they were afraid.

You would have thought the Gergesenes would have wished Jesus to remain with them, when they found He could do such a miracle as this; but I suppose they were more vexed at the loss of the two thousand pigs, than pleased at the poor man being cured; for they begged the Saviour to go away, and not stay with them any longer.

So Jesus went back into the boat. And the man who had been possessed with the devil, prayed Him that he might remain with Him, and follow Him. But Jesus would not allow it. He said,—

"Go home to your friends, and tell them what

great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you."

Then the man went away, and did the work Jesus had given him to do. He told all over that country, how good the Lord had been to him.

And so Jesus and His disciples went back again across the lake. And the people on the other side received Him gladly; for they were all waiting for Him.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

FOR a long time John the Baptist had been shut up in prison, by King Herod's orders. And this was the reason that the king was angry with him.

I must tell you, first, that Herod was a very wicked man. He was a son of that Herod who had murdered all the little babies in Bethlehem, just after Jesus was born; and he was almost as bad and cruel a man as his father had been.

Now Herod had done two things that were very displeasing to God: he had put away his own true wife; and he had married Herodias, his brother Philip's wife.

Well, at the time that John the Baptist was

RUINS OF EPHESUS.

preaching in the wilderness, Herod heard of him. He heard how he was being followed by crowds of people; and how he baptized all those who were sorry for their sins; and the king wished to see this great prophet and teacher.

So John was sent for to the palace.

You remember I told you how he was accustomed to dress. He always wore a large rough mantle of camel's hair, with a leathern belt round his waist; and in these same garments he stood before King Herod, and his queen, Herodias.

Down by the river Jordan the Baptist had never been afraid to speak to the soldiers, the publicans, and the Pharisees, and to tell them of their sins; and now, in the palace, he was not afraid to speak to Herod of his sin.

As he stood before him, he boldly told him, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."

This made Herod very angry; and he gave orders that John the Baptist should be thrown into prison.

But Herodias was more than angry; she *hated* John now, and she wanted to have him killed; but Herod was afraid to do this; he knew that John was a holy man, and God's messenger, and he would not let him be put to death.

Yet that wicked queen would not give up the hope of getting her own way at last; she was always planning for it, and watching for an opportunity of gaining her point. It was not enough for

her that John was in a horrible prison—that he had been many months there—she would never rest satisfied as long as he was alive.

At last the opportunity came that she had been looking for so long; and it happened in this way.

It was Herod's birthday; and he made a great supper to his lords, chief captains, and great men. Before the banquet was quite over, Herodias sent in her young daughter, Salome, who was very beautiful, to dance before the king; and her dancing pleased him so much, and all the nobles who were sitting with him, that he said to the young girl,—

"Tell me what you would like me to give you; whatever it is you shall have it."

And he made her a very solemn promise, "Whatever you ask for, I will give it you, even to the half of my kingdom."

Then the girl ran to her mother, and told her what the king had said. "What shall I ask for?" she inquired of her mother.

And what do you think that wicked queen answered? this was the opportunity she had so long been waiting for, and she said at once,—

"Ask for the head of John the Baptist."

Was the young girl horrified at such a request? Not at all; she was cruel, like her mother. So she went straight back to the king again in a great hurry, and asked, saying,—

"I wish you to give me by-and-by, in a dish, the head of John the Baptist."

When the king heard this he was exceedingly sorry; yet because he had promised her, and because he had made the promise before all his nobles, he would not refuse her.

He was more afraid of what his courtiers would say if he broke his promise than of what God would think. He was more anxious to please this cruel girl, and her yet more cruel mother, than he was to please the God who made him. So he sent "immediately" an executioner to the prison, to cut off the head of Christ's faithful witness.

And yet he was very sorry to do it—he knew he was very *wicked* to do it—he had often liked to listen to John's preaching (when he did not speak about that one sin which Herod would not give up), and he had done many things because of him; but because of this foolish oath which he had made, he committed this awful sin.

The king's order was quickly obeyed; and in a very little time the bleeding head of the great prophet was brought in on a large dish or tray, and given to the dancing girl, who took it, and carried it to her mother.

A little time afterwards, when Herod heard of all the wonderful things that Jesus was doing, his guilty conscience made him think of the murdered prophet, and he said to his servants,—

"It is John the Baptist, whom I beheaded; he is risen from the dead, and that is why he is able to do all these miracles."

We may be sure that neither peace nor happiness ever came to Herod or his guilty wife after this. Sin *always* brings sorrow; and so it was with them.

You may imagine how grieved and distressed the disciples of John were when they heard that the king had killed their dear master. They went to the prison, then lovingly and sadly took up the headless body, and laid it reverently in a tomb.

After this they went and told Jesus. Their hearts were sore and full of sadness, and they knew that He would sympathize with them—they knew He loved their master.

Did Jesus grieve?

Yes; for no heart was ever so loving or tender as His own. And as, after He had heard the sad story, He went into a desert place apart, we may be sure He mourned for the cruel death of His friend and forerunner.

CHAPTER XXXII.

FEEDING THE FIVE THOUSAND.

THE twelve Apostles had been sent away, by two and two, on their mission of mercy. They had received their Lord's orders to do as He had

done—to preach the Word, to heal the sick, to cast out devils—and they had gone round Galilee preaching and working miracles.

Now they had just returned from their first journey; and they told Jesus both what they had done and what they had taught.

There were so many people with Jesus, and so many were coming and going, that they had no quiet time at all, and no leisure even to eat; and Jesus, whose thoughtful care for His disciples was always so wonderful, said to them,—

"Come into some quiet desert place and rest awhile." He saw they were weary, and needed rest.

So they got ready a boat very quickly, and went away as secretly as they could. But the people saw them going, and they ran fast out of the cities, and followed them.

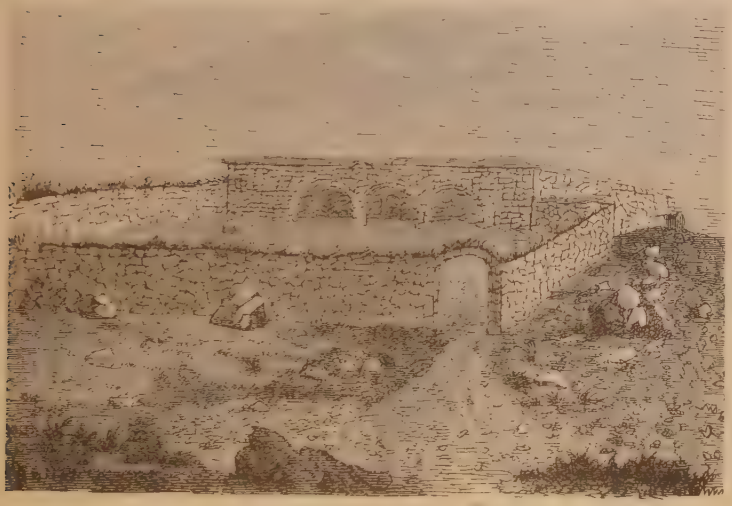
And so Jesus could not have the quiet time with His disciples that He wanted; for when they got to that desert place across the lake, a great crowd had already begun to collect. Some of them had followed Jesus in boats across the water, but many more had gone a long way round, by the sea-coast.

Was Jesus vexed and angry that the people followed Him so, and did not leave Him in peace?

Oh, no. When he saw the crowds that had come to Him, He was moved with compassion—that means, He felt a great pity for them, because they

were like sheep that had no shepherd to take care of them. He was the Good Shepherd; He cared for them, and He began to talk to them—to tell them many things about the kingdom of heaven, and He healed all those who were sick.

The time passed on; all day long they had been



AN EASTERN SHEEPFOLD.

listening to Jesus, never thinking how late it was getting: and now it was evening. The twelve disciples thought the people ought not to remain any longer, so they said to Jesus,—

"Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and villages round about, and lodge for the night, and buy themselves food. For we are

(170) COME UNTO ME.

here in a desert place; it is very late, and they have nothing to eat."

But how surprised they were at Jesus' answer! He said, "There is no need to send them away; you give them something to eat."

They looked at each other in astonishment; what could their Master mean?

Philip said, "If we were to spend all the money we have in buying bread, it would not be enough for all these many people." For there were five thousand men, besides women and children.

Jesus said, "How many loaves have you here? Go and see."

Then Andrew said, "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fishes; but what are they among so many?"

Jesus answered, "Make the men sit down."

And now the disciples are busy going about amongst the people, and making them sit down, in a quiet, orderly way, upon the soft green grass. So they sat down in rows of fifty, for this was the way Jesus had told the disciples to arrange them.

Then the Saviour took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, He gave thanks and broke the bread, and gave it to the disciples to set before the multitude. In the same way He divided the fishes amongst them all.

The food went on increasing in the Saviour's hands; and He went on breaking and dividing, and

giving it to the disciples, and they passed it on to the people, till at last they had all eaten, and were filled. Every one had had as much as he wanted.

When they had quite finished, Jesus said to His disciples, "Gather up the little bits that remain, that nothing may be wasted."

So they got some baskets, and put all the little scraps into it; and in this way they filled twelve baskets quite full of little pieces of bread.

Was not this wonderful? There was actually more food after all the people had eaten, than there was before they had begun to eat.

Then all those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, "This is of a truth that prophet, the Messiah, that should come into the world."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

JESUS WALKING ON THE SEA.

THE five thousand men were greatly excited when they rose up from that supper which had been so wonderfully provided for them.

They began to talk together of all Jesus had done for them that day—how He had taught them, healed them, and fed them—and they thought they would like to have Him for their king. How much

better (they thought) that *He* should rule over them, instead of that cruel Herod whom they hated.

Jesus knew all that they were thinking about, and, talking of. He knew that they were planning to take Him by force and make Him a king; He saw too, that His own disciples were beginning to join in the excitement, and to share the feelings of the crowd; so He was in haste to disperse them and send them home.

First of all He sent the disciples away. They did not like to leave Him, for they thought if the time had indeed come for their dear Master to receive a kingdom and a crown, they ought to be with Him. Jesus, therefore, had to compel them to go; He constrained them (for they went unwillingly) to go into their boat again, and cross over the lake towards Capernaum.

Then He gently persuaded the multitude to return to their own homes. His voice calmed them; and no doubt they left the more readily when they found that His disciples had already been sent away.

Almost all had gone away at last; only a few remained behind, unwilling to leave. And then what did Jesus do?

He turned away from that spot, and climbed up the steep side of a mountain that was near, that He might be all alone with God. It had been a weary day, and He was tired; and He greatly

longed for the blessed rest of communion with His Father.

There He remained till the twilight passed away, and the dark night came on. It was a wild and stormy night; but He liked being there, where no human eye could see Him, and where He could pour out His whole soul to God. Hour after hour passed, and still He remained there praying.

But what were His disciples doing all this time? They had got into their boat, as their Master bade them, and they were trying to cross over the water as He had commanded; but a strong wind had risen up, blowing straight against them, and they had not made much progress.

Their boat, too, was much tossed about on the waves, and they were working hard at the oars, toiling in rowing. But Jesus had not forgotten them; at the hill-top He was watching them, and He would go and help them soon.

It was the middle of the night, and Jesus, having ended His prayer, came down from the mountain, and walked to the edge of the lake.

The waves came dashing up against His feet, and no boat was near. How was He to get to His disciples?

The Saviour needed no boat to carry Him across; for He is God as well as man, and He could walk on the water as easily as on dry land.

The disciples were still in their boat, struggling to

get it across to the opposite shore. They had only just got about half-way, when they saw dimly, through the darkness, a figure walking on the sea. Who could it be?

They were dreadfully frightened—much more frightened at the figure than they were at the howling wind and tossing waves. They thought it was a spirit—a being from another world—and they cried out with fear.

But quickly, with tender pity at their alarm, Jesus spoke: "Be of good cheer; it is I; do not be afraid."

Oh, how glad they were to hear again that much-loved voice! Peter, in his joy, could scarcely wait till Jesus came into the boat; so he called out,—

"Lord, if it is you, tell me to come to you on the water."

Jesus answered, "Come."

In a moment Peter climbed over the side of the vessel, and walked on the water to go to his dear Master. As long as he looked at Jesus he was in safety; but in a little while he began to look round him—to look at the waves, how they were tossing themselves; to notice the wind, how stormy and strong it was—and then he got frightened.

He began to sink, and in his terror he cried out, "Lord, save me."

Immediately, quickly, Jesus put out his hand and caught him. Then He said to him gently,—

"Oh, how little faith you have! Why were you afraid?"

Do you notice that all Peter's courage, and the wonderful power of being able to walk on the water,

PETER STARTS TO WALK TO JESUS.

were only got by looking at his Master? And so, if *we* want courage to do some unpleasant duty, or to bear some pain or sorrow, *we* also must look to Jesus! We must ask Him to give us His Spirit, and to give

us His help; and then He will always give us the courage and the strength we need.

The disciples were so glad to receive their Lord into the boat again. And now two more miracles followed. The wind ceased altogether and suddenly; and instead of being in the midst of the sea, they found they were at the landing-place where they wished to be.

Then those who were in the boat came and worshipped Jesus, saying, "Of a truth you are the Son of God."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

MANY DISCIPLES LEAVE JESUS.

I TOLD you that when Jesus sent away the multitude, after He had worked that miracle of feeding the five thousand, some of the people still remained behind.

They had seen that Jesus had not gone away with His disciples; they knew that no other boat was there by which He could have got away; so when the morning came, they thought they were sure of finding Him. But when they had looked about for Him, great was their surprise to find He was nowhere to be seen.

What could have become of Him? Where could He have gone?

While they were waiting and wondering, some boats came from a city called Tiberias, and they were going to Capernaum. So the people who had remained on shore all night, got into the boats and went to Capernaum, still seeking for Jesus.

Why were they looking so eagerly for Him? Was it because they loved Him, and liked to listen to His words? We shall soon see.

The people joined the Saviour at last; He was in the Synagogue teaching. They wondered so much how He got there, that they could not help asking Him,—

"Master, when did you come here?"

Jesus did not answer their question; but what He said, showed them that He could read their hearts as easily as we can read an open book.

Jesus said, "You seek me, not because you saw the miracles, but because you did eat of the bread and were filled. Do not be so eager for the food for your bodies, but try more earnestly to get your *souls* fed—to get that everlasting life which I shall give you."

I think the people must have felt ashamed when they found that Jesus could see their most secret thoughts. They asked, "What must we do that we may work the works of God?"

Jesus answered, "This is the work of God, that you believe on me; for God has sent me."

But, alas! they did not really want to do God's

work. Their next question proved how hard and unbelieving their hearts were. This is what they said,—

"What sign will you show us, that we may believe you? What miracles will you do?"

Surely Jesus had worked miracles enough to show them that He was the Son of God! Surely, after having taught them for so long, they ought to have believed that He was indeed the Saviour of the world!

But Jesus goes on patiently teaching them again. He calls Himself the Bread of Life, and tells the people that those who come to Him shall never hunger, and those who believe on Him shall never thirst. That means, He will give to those that seek Him, all that their souls require—He will give them everlasting life.

Jesus went on to say, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came to do my Father's will; and this is His will: that every one who believes in me shall have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

The Jews had been listening to Jesus as He was speaking to the people; and now they began to get angry with Him again, as they had so often done before.

They said, "How can He call Himself the Bread of Life? How can He say He came down from heaven? Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph the carpenter?"

Jesus said, "Do not murmur among yourselves. Truly, truly I say to you, he that believes on me, has everlasting life. I am that Bread of Life. He who eats this bread shall live for ever."

The Jews were yet more angry as they heard this. "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" they asked with great indignation.

And now many of Jesus' own disciples began to complain, and to say, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?"

When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples murmured at what He had said, He explained to them His meaning. It was not His *real* flesh they were to eat—not His *real* blood they were to drink—but they were to feed upon His *words*. He said, "It is the Spirit that gives life; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life. But some of you do not believe."

For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who would betray Him.

From that time many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him. They had followed Him a long time, and had liked to be with Him; but now they could not understand His words, and they were offended and discontented.

It made Jesus sad to see them go; He was sorry for their sakes, and He was sorry for His own; for He loved them.

Then He turned to the Twelve, and asked them sorrowfully, "Will you also go away?"

Peter answered at once, with a heart full of affection, "Lord, to whom should we go? You have the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Peter spoke for the others as well as for himself. He felt sure that all *must* love their Master as much as he did. But what did Jesus reply?

"Have not I chosen you twelve? and one of you is a devil."

He spoke of Judas Iscariot; for he it was that should betray Him: and he was one of the twelve.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE WOMAN OF TYRE.

AFTER these things Jesus went away from Capernaum—away from the unbelieving Jews and the fault-finding Scribes and Pharisees—to go to a part of the country where He had never been before. It was a heathen land into which He had now come; but great numbers of the people had heard of Jesus, and had even gone down into Galilee to see Him.

The Lord had not come into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon to preach, but for rest and quiet. He was accompanied by the twelve Apostles; and with them

He went into a house, and did not wish any one to know about it.

But He could not be hid. For a woman lived near there who had a young daughter; and the poor girl was afflicted with an evil spirit; and the mother was greatly distressed about her and very unhappy. She knew quite well that only one person could cast the devil out of her afflicted child—and that was the great Prophet of Nazareth, of whom she had heard such wonderful things. But how could she get to Him? Where could she find Him?

RUINS OF TYRE.

At last, one day, to her great joy, she saw Jesus in her own country. With hope trembling in her heart she followed Him, and cried, saying, "O Lord, thou Son of David, my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil!"

But Jesus took no notice of her, and answered her not a word.

Then the disciples came and begged Jesus to dismiss her. They said, "Send her away, for she cries after us."

It was not that they wanted their Master to send her away without having her prayer granted; they only wanted Him to do quickly the deed of mercy that they were sure He would do in the end, so that her crying after them would not make all the other people in the place know that they were there.

But Jesus wanted to show His disciples what great faith this poor Gentile woman had. For this reason He tried her faith yet further.

He said, "I am not sent to the Gentiles, but only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

The woman still persevered in her prayer. She came and fell at His feet, and worshipped Him, saying,—

"Lord, help me."

Still Jesus does not help her.

"It is not right to take the children's bread," He said, "and to cast it to the dogs."

The woman answered, "That is true, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table. I do not ask for the children's bread —I only ask for the crumbs."

Then Jesus answered and said unto her, "O woman, great is your faith; be it unto you even as you wish."

So the woman went home contented, and happy, and thankful, because she believed the Saviour's word. And when she was come to her house she

found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.

There are three things about this woman of Tyre that I want you to notice; for they are things that God likes to see in all His children; and they are the signs of His Holy Spirit in the heart.

She had great faith. She felt quite sure that Jesus could heal her daughter, because she knew He was the Son of God.

She had great patience. Though Jesus appeared not to listen to her, or to care for her, still she went on praying: she never ceased asking for the blessing till she got it.

She had great humility. She felt herself to be quite unworthy of having her petition granted; she was only a poor Gentile—no better than a dog—yet she knew Jesus would not refuse her on that account.

Do you remember how the Saviour said, long ago, in His Sermon on the mount, that those are blessed who do not think much of themselves? The woman of Tyre was one of these: she was humble-minded.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

PEOPLE HEALED, AND TAUGHT, AND FED.

THE Lord Jesus journeyed about with His disciples a great deal in those days; and now He came to a part of the country called Decapolis.

The people there, like those about Tyre and Sidon, had heard of Him; and a good many had followed Him at one time. More lately, too, they had heard of His wonderful works; for the demoniac whom He had healed—the man out of whom He had cast so many devils—had gone into that country, telling everywhere how Jesus had restored him to his right mind.

So now, when Jesus came there, a great multitude went after Him. He went up into a mountain; and they brought to Him all those who were sick, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and He healed them all.

It must have been a wonderful sight to see so many cured so quickly of all their diseases. And the multitude were astonished when they saw the dumb speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see; and they glorified—they praised—the God of heaven.

Amongst those who were brought to Jesus was a man who was deaf, and who could not speak plainly;

and they begged Jesus very earnestly that He would put His hands upon him and heal him. So the Saviour took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers into his ears; and then He spit and touched his tongue.

When He had done that, He looked up to heaven and sighed, and said, "Be opened."

And immediately the man's ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he could hear perfectly, and could speak quite plainly.

I wonder why Jesus sighed when He did this miracle! Perhaps He knew that the man would not make a good use of the blessings He was giving him. And, indeed, we know that he did not begin to use his tongue as Jesus would have had him do. For the Lord told the man, and his friends who brought him, not to tell any one what had been done. But they did not obey Him; they told the wonderful story everywhere.

All who heard it were greatly astonished. They said, "He has done all things well; He makes both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak."

No wonder the people liked to be with Jesus! no wonder they could not bear to leave Him! for not only did He heal the sick, but He taught them, and preached to them; and they never wearied of listening to Him. No one had ever spoken to them like this before, and they were so afraid of losing any of His words, that they would not even go to their

homes; but for two nights and three days they continued with Him.

At last Jesus called His disciples to Him, and said,—

"I feel great pity for the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat; and if I send them away, without any food, to their own houses, they will be ill; for many of them come from a long way off."

His disciples answered: "But where could we get bread enough in this wilderness, to feed so great a multitude?"

Jesus asked, "How many loaves have you?"

They said, "Seven."

Then Jesus told the people to sit down on the ground; and He took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to His disciples to set before them; and the disciples gave the bread to the people.

They had also a few small fishes. These also Jesus took, and blessed, and gave to the disciples to set before the people.

So they did all eat and were filled: and they took up of the broken bits that were left, seven baskets full. And afterwards Jesus sent the people away to their homes.

There were four thousand men, besides women and children, that Jesus had fed. How they must have wondered as they saw that He had but the

seven loaves and the few small fishes; and yet, not only did they all eat as much as ever they wanted, but there was also such a great deal over.

This was the second time Jesus had worked a miracle by feeding a great multitude.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

JESUS TELLS THE TWELVE OF COMING SORROWS.

ONCE more Jesus went with His disciples to the shores of Gennesareth. But directly He entered one of the towns — called Magdala — His enemies, the Pharisees, came again, to tempt and to annoy Him.

They began to question Him, and to ask Him to give them a sign from heaven—to do some great mircle—to show that He was the Son of God.

Then Jesus sighed very deeply in His spirit. His heart was pained to see how full of wickedness and unbelief they were. "Why will these people seek after a sign?" He said. "There shall no sign be given to them."

And He left them. He would not stay there, where He was hated. He took a ship, and crossed over the lake, and went to another place.

And they brought a blind man to Jesus, begging

Him that He would touch him, and restore his sight. The Saviour never refused to help any who were suffering, and who asked His aid; no one ever came to Him in vain; so He took the poor blind man by the hand, and Himself led him gently and tenderly out of the town,—for He did not wish to heal him in sight of all the people who lived there.

Then the Lord spit on his eyes, and put His hands upon him, and asked him if he saw anything. But he could not see very distinctly yet; he looked up, and said,—

"I see men like trees walking."

After that Jesus put His hands again upon the man's eyes, and told him to look up; and this time his sight was quite restored, and he saw everything plainly.

Then Jesus sent him away to his own house, and said to him, "Mind you do not go into the town; and do not tell to any one in the town, how I have made you see."

The people in that place were unbelieving, and did not love the Lord Jesus; so that is why He did not wish the miracle that He had done to be known there.

After that, Jesus journeyed on, to go to other parts of the country. No one was with Him now but His disciples—the faithful Twelve who had been with Him so long.

Jesus had been praying; and when His prayer was over, as they were walking along He asked,—

(190) "BEHOLD, I STAND AT THE DOOR AND KNOCK."

"Who do people say that I am?"

The disciples answered,—"Some say that you are John the Baptist; and some say you are Elijah, or some other Prophet."

How strange it was that, after all Jesus had done and taught, the people would not believe in Him as the Messiah! Sometimes, you remember, when they had seen Him do some very wonderful thing, they did exclaim that He was the Son of God: but they did not really believe it in their hearts, or they could not have changed their minds about it. They believed that He was only a Prophet.

Then Jesus questioned His disciples again. "But who do *you* say that I am?"

Peter answered at once—"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Jesus said to him, "You are blessed; because no *man* has taught you this, but God—even my Father which is in heaven."

And now Jesus began to tell His disciples something that made them very sad and sorrowful. He told them that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things—much rudeness and cruelty—from the chief priests and rulers, and that He must be killed; but that after three days He would rise again from the dead.

This was, indeed, heavy tiding. Could it be possible that their own dear Master was to be killed? That He, God's Son, was to be put to death by the

people at Jerusalem? Their hearts ached at the terrible thought; and Peter so forgot himself that he caught hold of Jesus, and began to find fault with Him.

"God forbid," he said; "this shall not happen to you, Lord."

Ah! just before, the Saviour had praised Peter for his faith; now He rebukes Him for thinking that he knew better than his Master.

"Get behind me, Satan; you are a stumbling-stone to me; for your thoughts are not the thoughts of God, but of men."

Jesus called Peter "Satan," because He knew that it was the devil that was tempting him to speak like that.

The disciples could not understand that the only way sinful men could get to heaven, was by the death of Jesus,—that He must bear in his own body on the cross the punishment of all our sins. They only saw the sadness of it; they did not see the necessity.

But why were they not comforted at the thought of their Lord's resurrection on the third day?

The reason was, that they did not understand what the rising from the dead meant; and they were afraid to ask Him.

Jesus went on to tell them that trials, and difficulties, and hardships were not only for Him, but for His followers, too; and that they must be pre-

pared to bear cheerfully shame, and contempt, and even *death*, for His sake. He told them, too, that one day He would come down from heaven in the glory of His Father, with the holy angels; and then He would reward all those who were faithful. And He gave them this warning,—

"Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, of him shall I be ashamed when I come again in glory."

Jesus said also: "I tell you of a truth that some of you who are standing here shall not die, till you have seen the Son of man coming in His kingdom."

He was going very soon to show three of them His glory; and this would better help them to bear the sorrows that would follow.

The disciples were very grieved—very downhearted—as they heard of all the troubles that were before them. But they loved their Master too well to wish to leave Him; they felt they could bear anything for His dear sake, because they loved Him so much.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE TRANSFIGURATION.

SIX days after that sad talk which had so distressed the Apostles—when their Lord had told them plainly, for the first time, that He must die—Jesus took Peter, and James, and John, and brought them up to the top of a high mountain.

It was evening, and the disciples were very tired after their long, steep climb; they were quite heavy with sleep, too; so they lay down on the ground, and were soon fast asleep.

While they were sleeping, Jesus was praying; and as He prayed, a most wonderful change passed over Him. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became all glistening and bright, and white as the light itself.

And two men appeared with Jesus—Moses and Elijah—and they also were in brightness and glory; and they talked with Jesus, speaking of the death which He should die at Jerusalem.

The dazzling light that was shining all around them awoke the slumbering disciples; and as they started up in wonder, what did they see?

They saw their Master transfigured before them—changed and glorified! They saw also the two

men who were with Him, and they knew who they were—Moses, that great prophet who had lived on earth fourteen hundred and fifty years before, and who was called the friend of God; and Elijah, who had lived nine hundred years before, and had been taken up in a whirlwind, and with chariot and horses of fire, into heaven.

And what were they talking about?

Just of that very thing that had made the Twelve so unhappy; they spoke of the sufferings and death that their blessed Master should endure at Jerusalem; and Peter, James and John heard what they said.

While they were still looking in awe and astonishment, a bright cloud came and overshadowed them all; and they feared as they entered into the cloud. Then there came a voice out of the cloud, which said,—

"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear Him."

Whose voice was that?

It was the Father's voice—the voice of God Himself—and when the disciples heard it, they were sore afraid; and they fell on their faces on the earth.

Then Jesus came and gently touched them, and said,—

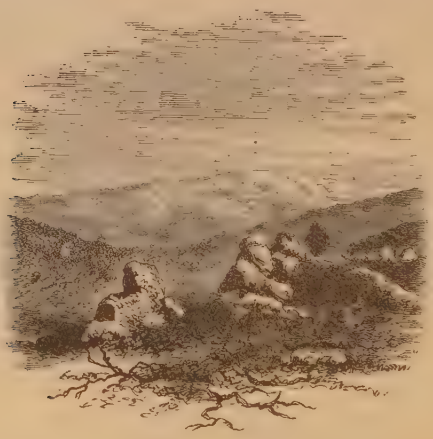
"Get up, and do not be afraid."

At His words, and at His touch, they lifted up

their eyes; and when they had looked all round, they saw that no one was there but Jesus.

As they came down from the mountain, Jesus gave them a strict order. He said, "Tell no one what you have seen, till after I am risen from the dead."

And Peter, James and John obeyed Jesus; and never spoke of it even to the rest of the Apostles. But they often spoke of it amongst themselves, and wondered what the rising from the dead should mean.



MT. HERMON.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE DEMONIAC BOY.

WHEN Jesus, with His three companions, had come down to the foot of the mountain, He saw the other nine Apostles with a great multitude round them, and the Scribes questioning with them. It was a scene of great confusion and excitement, and of sorrow and suffering, too; and the disciples were looking perplexed and ashamed.

When the people saw Jesus, they ran to Him. There must have been something of the glory still left on His face, for the Bible tells us that the people were greatly amazed, and that they saluted Him—that is, they showed Him reverence.

Then Jesus asked the Scribes, "What are you disputing about?"

But before they could answer, a man pushed his way through the crowd, and kneeling down to Jesus, said,—

"Master, I beseech you, look upon my son; for he is my only child And he is deaf and dumb, and out of his mind, and sore vexed; for often he falls into the fire, and often into the water; and I brought him to your disciples, that they should cast the evil spirit out of him, but they could not."

Ah! this then was what made the Apostles look

so ashamed and distressed. Their Master had given them power to heal all manner of diseases, and to cast out devils; yet they could not not cure this poor demoniac boy. We shall see presently why it was that they failed in doing it.

When Jesus heard the father's story, He answered,—

"O faithless people, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I bear with you? Bring your son to me."

So they brought Him to Jesus; and when the boy saw Him, he fell on the ground again in violent convulsions, and foamed at the mouth.

"How long has he been like this?" the Saviour asked.

The father replied, "Ever since he was a little child. But if you can do anything, have pity on us and help us."

"If you can!" Why, of course Jesus can! but the question is, *if the man can believe;* for Jesus always required faith in those who brought the sufferers to Him. So the Lord said,—

"If you can believe, all things are possible to him that believeth."

And immediately the father of the boy cried out with tears, "Lord, I believe; do help my unbelief."

When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the wicked spirit, saying to

him, "You dumb and deaf spirit, I bid you come out of him, and enter no more into him."

And the spirit cried, and tore him, and came out of him. Then the boy lay on the ground so still, that it seemed as if he were dead; and many of the people said, "He is dead."

But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and gave him to his father, quite cured and well. And all the people were amazed at the mighty power of God.

When Jesus was come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, "Why could not we cast out the evil spirit?"

Jesus told them plainly, "Because of your unbelief."

Yes, that was the reason; they had not faith enough. Perhaps since that sad talk with Jesus, when He had told them of the sorrow that was coming, their faith and trust in His power had got weaker. But they might have got more faith if they had only prayed for it.

Jesus said to them, "I say to you truly, that if you have faith, you shall say to this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you."

He told them, too, that if they had prayed, they would have been able to cast the devil out of that poor boy. Faith and prayer can work miracles.

Dear children, in this story of the demoniac boy,

there is something for you to think about very seriously. Is it not terrible to read how completely he was under the power of an evil spirit? and have you ever thought that sometimes *you too* are under the power of Satan?

I will explain to you how this is.

When you do what you know is wrong, and when you indulge in angry, naughty tempers, you are obeying Satan's will, and you are putting yourself in

WOMEN GRINDING.

his power; and the oftener you sin, the stronger is his power over you.

Satan is stronger than you, and by yourself you cannot fight against him. But Jesus is stronger than Satan, and Jesus is always ready to help—more ready a great deal, than you are to pray. So re-

member that when you want grace and strength to give up your wrong-doing, to amend your faults, and to restrain your bad tempers or unkind dispositions, you must ask the Lord Jesus to help you, and you must believe that He both *can* and *will* do it.

Do not forget that all naughtiness is the work of an evil spirit. And do not forget that *God has given you power to cast out the evil spirit.*

How? By prayer to Him, and by faith in Him.

CHAPTER XL.

JESUS TEACHES THE TWELVE.

AND now Jesus again returns to Capernaum, His own city. But he went secretly, and did not wish that any one should know it. Why was this?

It was because the people were unbelieving and hardened; and the Pharisees and the rulers hated Him. He had done many mighty works there, but they had not believed in Him; He had taught them long, but they had not repented of their evil ways. So He was not going to teach the multitude any more; but to teach and train the twelve Apostles who were to carry on His work.

He was constantly telling them now, the story that it made them so sad to hear; for He wanted to prepare their minds for the trials that were coming.

"The Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of men, and they shall kill Him."

Yet though He spoke so plainly, they could not understand it,—they did not think what it really meant, and they were afraid to ask Him. They knew He was the Messiah, and they knew He would reign in glory, and that He would let them be with Him; and this was what they were more often thinking about.

So, whenever Jesus spoke of His death, it made them very sad at the time; but they seemed to forget continually, that the suffering must come before the glory.

Even now, while they were on the way to Capernaum, and after Jesus had been telling them that He must soon be put to death, they began to dispute amongst themselves which of them should be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven! They were very far from being like their Blessed Master yet: jealousy and pride were in their hearts,—each wanted to be first. They had not yet learned to be humble-minded.

And they must have shown bad temper, too; for it was not a friendly talk, but a dispute.

Jesus knew it all; but He took no notice of it then. When, however, they had reached Capernaum, and were in the house, He asked them,—

"What were you disputing about on the way?"

No wonder they were silent! They were ashamed

to tell their Master what had passed; they were ashamed that He should know what a different spirit to His own they had shown.

Then Jesus sat down and called the Twelve around Him, and taught them again; and, that they might understand very plainly the lesson He would teach them, He called a little child to Him; and when He had taken him in His arms, He said to them,—

"Except you become changed, and become as little children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

That little child which the gentle Saviour held in His arms, must have been a very obedient, loving, and humble little boy. We know that all children are not like this; but when they have never any wish or thought of being first,—when they do not think much of themselves, when they are obedient and humble, then the Lord Jesus is pleased with them; for so must all His disciples be, whether they are grown up, or only little children.

Do you remember how He said once, "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart?" It is not easy to be meek; but if we pray for God's Holy Spirit, He will help us to conquer the pride, or jealousy, or unkindness that is in our hearts.

While Jesus was speaking to His disciples, John said,—

"Master, we saw a man casting out devils in your name; and we told him not to do it, because he did not follow us."

I think John must have begun to fear, as he listened to His Master's words, that they had done wrong, and had not been meek or kind in forbidding that man to cast out devils; and so now he confessed it to Jesus, as if to ask Him what He thought.

The Lord did not approve of what they had done. He said,—

"Do not forbid him; for no one who shall do a miracle in my name, can speak evil of me."

The man must have believed in Jesus, or he could not have done miracles.

Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, how often shall my brother offend me, and I forgive him? till seven times?"

Jesus answered, "I say not unto you until seven times, but until seventy times seven." (That means any number of times.)

He told them, also, *how* they must forgive; it must be from the heart. "Your heavenly Father," He said, "will not forgive *you*, if you, from your hearts, forgive not every one his brother their faults."

And the Apostles said unto the Lord, "Increase our faith."

They felt it was not easy to forgive like this,—

just as it was not easy to be meek like their Master. So they made a wise prayer, that He would give them more faith in His power, to make them what they ought to be.

CHAPTER XLI.

JESUS TEACHES IN THE TEMPLE.

THE time was drawing near for a very joyful feast to be held at Jerusalem. It was not the Passover; but towards the end of every year, after the harvest of fruit and grain had been all gathered in, a great feast was held (something like a harvest-home in England), called the Feast of Tabernacles.

The brethren of Jesus—His relations—were going up to this feast, and they wanted to know if He was going too; so they said to Him,—

"Why do you stay here so quietly, if you want people to know about you? If you do wonderful things, show yourself to the world! Go from here; go to Judæa—to Jerusalem—that all your disciples may see the works you do!"

His brethren spoke like this because they did not believe in Him. But Jesus answered meekly,—

"My time is not yet come," He said. "The world does not hate you, but it hates me because I tell it of all its evil works. You go up to this feast: I will

not go up just yet, because my time is not yet full come."

So His brethren went up to Jerusalem.

When they were gone, then Jesus went up; but not immediately. He did not go with all the other people who were flocking to the holy city; He went quietly with His disciples afterwards.

The Jews at Jerusalem were very anxious to know if He was coming to the feast; and they looked about for Him, and asked, "Where is He?"

And the people began to talk about Him. Some said, "He is a good man;" others said, "No, He is not,—He deceives the people."

The Feast of Tabernacles lasted eight days; and four days had already passed, when, to the surprise of all the people (for they had quite given up all hope of seeing Him), Jesus was seen. He went up into the Temple, and taught.

The Jews, as they listened to Him, could not help wondering at Him. "How is it that this man has such learning? for He is only a carpenter's son," they said amongst themselves.

Jesus knew what they were saying, and He answered them: "My learning comes from my heavenly Father. And if you would do God's will, you would know quite well that what I teach is of God."

Then Jesus asked them, suddenly, a question that showed them how well He knew what was in their hearts. He said, "Why do you go about to kill me?"

Their answer was rude and rough. "You have a devil," they said; "who goes about to kill you?"

Jesus answered them gently; reminding them how He had cured the sick man at Bethesda, more than a year ago. He said, "I have done one work, and you all marvel at it. Why are you angry with me because I have made a man quite well on the Sabbath day?"

They could not answer this question, for in their hearts they knew that He was right and they were wrong.

Then some of the Jews, who lived in Jerusalem, said, "Is not this He whom they seek to kill? But, see! He speaks quite openly, and they say nothing to Him. Can it be that He is the Messiah?"

And many of the people believed on Him, and said, "When Christ comes, can He do greater miracles than these which this man has done?"

When the proud Pharisees and chief priests heard that the people were beginning to talk in this way, they sent some soldiers to take Jesus. They could not bear that any one should believe in Him, and they were longing to have Him killed.

So the soldiers went, as they were bidden; but while they were watching for an opportunity to take Him, they heard Him teaching. They heard Him say that if any one thirsted for the Water of Life, He would give it to them.—He would give them the Holy Spirit; and, as the soldiers listened, they felt

they could not, and they dared not, lay hands on such a holy Teacher.

So they went back again to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them angrily, "Why have you not brought Him?"

The soldiers answered, "Never man spake like this man!"

The Pharisees, were very angry. They said, "Are you also deceived? Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees believed on Him?"

Yes; one of their rulers *did* believe in Him. Do you remember who it was?

It was Nicodemus, who came to Jesus by night. But Nicodemus was afraid to say openly that he believed in Him, because he was so much afraid of the Jews; so he only said, timidly,—

"We must not judge any one before we hear him, and know what his fault is."

The other rulers did not like to hear Nicodemus speak so gently of the man they hated, and they said, sneeringly,—

"Are you also a believer in Him? Search and look, for no prophet comes out of Galilee."

After that, all the people went away to their own homes. But Jesus had no home to go to; so He went up to the Mount of Olives, and there He stayed all night.

No doubt He spent the night in prayer to God, as He had so often done before. But very early in the

morning He was down in the Temple again; and all the people came to Him, and He sat down and taught them.

He said, "I am the Light of the World: he who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the Light of Life." That means that the disciples of the Lord Jesus will not walk in sin,—they will not take any pleasure in evil thoughts or evil deeds, but they will try to do God's will on earth, and He will give them everlasting life.

The Pharisees were listening to all He said, and now they began again to contradict Him.

"You say what is not true," they said. They were longing to take Him, but they could not, because the proper time had not come for Him to die.

Jesus was not afraid of them. He knew they would kill Him soon; and now He spoke very plainly to them, to tell them what their end would be, if they did not repent. He said,—

"If you do not believe that I am the Son of God you shall die in your sins. You want to kill Me, though I have only spoken to you the truth which I have heard of God."

The Jews said, "God is our Father."

Jesus answered, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, because I come from God. But you are not His children,—you are the children of the devil. He was a murderer and a liar from the beginning; and you do his works."

The Jews were more and more mad with rage as they listened to Him; and at last, in their hatred and passion, they took up stones to fling at Him, that they might stone Him to death.

But again He worked a miracle, as He had done once before, when the Nazarenes wanted to kill Him by throwing Him down a very steep hill, or rock. He hid Himself from them.

He went out of the Temple, passing right through the very midst of them. But they could not see Him! And so He passed by safely.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE MAN BORN BLIND.

NOW as Jesus was passing by, after He had gone out from the Temple, He saw a man who had been born blind.

Have you ever thought what a dreadful thing it must be to be *born* blind? This poor man had never seen his father or his mother; he had never seen the green trees or the beautiful flowers; he had never seen the bright sun shining, nor had he watched at night the silvery moon and the twinkling stars. He had never seen *anything*. Can you not imagine how sad it was?

When the disciples saw him, they asked Jesus,

saying, "Master, why was this man born blind? Was it because he was very wicked? or because his parents were very wicked?"

Jesus answered, "That is not the reason; it is because the power of God should be shown in him."

We do not read that this poor, blind beggar asked Jesus for anything; but the Saviour was too full of love and pity for any sufferer to pass Him by. So now He stopped, and spat on the ground; then He made clay, and spread the clay over the eyes of the blind man, and said to him,—

"Go and wash in the pool of Siloam."

The blind man did at once what he was told; he went and washed, and came back seeing.

Think what must have been his wonder at all the things he now saw for the first time in his life! The beautiful blue sky, the houses on each side of him, the people, the carriages, the animals and birds, were all new to him,—he had never seen any of them before.

I suppose the neighbors, and those who had seen him before, could scarcely recognize him, now that he was looking so bright and happy. They said, "Is not this he that sat and begged?"

And some of the people said, "Yes, this is he." Others said, "It is like him." But he said, "I am he."

Then they asked him, "How were your eyes opened?"

He said, "A man called Jesus, made clay and put it on my eyes, and told me to wash in the pool

POOL OF SILOAM.

of Siloam; and I went and washed, and I received my sight."

"Then they said to him, "Where is He?"

"He answered, "I do not know."

It was the Sabbath day when Jesus had done this miracle. So the people took the man to the Pharisees, and the Pharisees asked him what had been done to his eyes.

He told them, "He put clay upon them, and I washed and do see."

Some of the Pharisees, when they heard this, said, "This man is not of God, because He does not keep the Sabbath."

But others said, "Can a sinner do such miracles?"

So there was a great deal of disputing about it. Then they said to the man again, "What do you think of the man who has opened your eyes?"

He replied at once, "He is a Prophet."

But the Jews did not believe that the man had been blind at all, so they called his parents, and asked them about it.

The parents said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but how it is that he can now see, we do not know. But ask him about it; he will be able to tell you."

Then the Pharisees called the man who had been blind, and asked him again, "What did He do to you? how did He open your eyes?"

He answered them, "I have told you already, and you did not attend: why do you wish to hear it again? Do you wish to be His disciples?"

Then they sneered at him, and said, "*You* are His disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spoke to Moses,—as for this fellow, we know nothing about Him."

The man answered and said to them, "Why, this is a wonderful thing that you know nothing about Him, and yet He has opened my eyes! Since the world began, it has never been heard of, that any man has opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, He could do nothing."

The Pharisees were very angry at his daring to say this to them, and they were determined to punish him for it. They said, "You were altogether born in sins, and do you teach us?"

Then they gave an order that he was not to be allowed to go into the synagogue for a whole month. This was always reckoned a great disgrace.

Jesus heard that they had shut the man out from the synagogue for thirty days—a whole month—and so He went to look for him. When He had found him, He said,—

"Do you believe on the Son of God?"

The man answered, "Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?"

Jesus said to him, "You have seen Him; and it is He who is now speaking to you."

And the man replied, "Lord, I believe." Then he worshipped Him.

ROBBERS ON THE ROAD TO JERICHO. (215)

So Jesus opened the man's heart as well as his eyes, and gave him light both for his body and his soul. He now saw that Jesus was his Saviour; and because he believed in Him with all his heart, the Lord gave him, according to His promise, everlasting life.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE SEVENTY.

IN a little while—in less than half a year—Jesus would be crucified. He knew exactly the right time to lay down His precious life; and He would not put it off for a single hour. His delight was to do His Father's will; and His love for us was so great, that it made Him willing to die for us.

But before that dreadful time should come He wanted to journey about to a great many towns and villages; and He wanted the people to be prepared to receive Him. But He would not preach any more in Galilee. He had been there so much, and they did not believe in Him, and did not care to have Him amongst them. And He would not teach any more in Samaria; for He had sent two disciples into that country to say that their Lord was coming. But the people would not receive Him, and would not let Him have food or lodging, so He turned away from them.

But it was in the country beyond Jordan and in the land of Judæa that He intended to spend the last weeks of His life. He wanted the Gospel to be preached there; He wanted people to be told of a Saviour for sinners. But how few there were to tell them about it!

You remember how He had sent out the

JERUSALEM FROM THE ROAD TO BETHANY.

Twelve some time before, by two and two, to preach and heal the sick? Now He was going to send many more to carry His message of love and mercy.

So He appointed seventy men (besides the Twelve) that He might send them on before, by two and two,

into every place where He Himself intended to go afterwards.

The Seventy were true disciples of the Lord Jesus; they believed in Him, and they loved Him; and they were quite ready to go wherever He should send them. Jesus gave them instructions as to what they were to do. They were to heal the sick, to cast out devils, and to preach, saying,—

"The Kingdom of God is come near to you."

He told them that there would be dangers. "Go your ways," He said; "behold, I send you forth as lambs in the midst of wolves." There would be many people who would hate them, as they hated their master; but they were to be peaceable and gentle; as "wise as serpents, and harmless and simple as doves."

So the Seventy set out on their mission, and did the work their Lord had given them to do.

After some time they returned to Jesus to tell Him what they had done; and they were full of joy as they gave Him an account of it all. They said,—

"Lord, even the devils obey us, through your name."

Jesus answered, "Behold, I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and I give you power over devils; and nothing shall by any means hurt you. But do not rejoice most because the evil spirits obey you—be more glad because your names are written in heaven."

We do not know the names of the Seventy; but God knew them; and the name of each of them was written down in the Book of Life. Were the names of all the *Twelve* written there, too?

No. There was one amongst them whose heart was full of wickedness; and though he was an

BETHANY.

Apostle, though he could heal the sick and cast out devils, yet the Holy Spirit was not in him; and the master he liked *best* to serve was Satan, and not Jesus.

You remember how the Saviour said once, "I have chosen you Twelve, but one of you is a devil."

This was Judas Iscariot, the wicked Apostle who betrayed his Lord.

So, you see, it is much better to be a true disciple of the Lord Jesus, and a much happier thing to have your name written down in heaven, than to be able even to work miracles.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE PRODIGAL SON.

A RICH Pharisee made a feast on the Sabbath day, and invited Jesus to the feast. He did not ask Him out of kindness; for as soon as Jesus entered the house, the Pharisee and his friends began to watch Him; they wanted to see if He would do anything wrong, or if He would break the Sabbath.

Now there was a poor man standing just in front of Jesus who had the dropsy; his body was swollen with disease, and the Saviour, in His tender pity, wished to heal him. But what would the Pharisees think and say if He healed him on the Sabbath day?

Jesus knew with what unkind feelings they were watching Him, and He knew they had no pity for the sick man; and He was much grieved at the hardness of their hearts. Before He healed the

man. He asked the chief Pharisee, and those who were sitting at table with Him, this simple question,—

"Is it right to heal on the Sabbath day?"

And they did not answer a word. They knew it was not wrong; and yet they could not bear Jesus to do it.

Then the Saviour took him and healed him, and let him go.

After he had done this, He said to them,—"If any of you shall have an ox or an ass fallen into a deep hole, will you not pull him out on the Sabbath day? and how much better is a man than a beast!"

Ah, they knew that Jesus was right, and they were silent before Him; but they never liked His teaching, when He showed them their faults.

Yet there were some people who liked to hear Him; and these were the publicans and sinners. They were wicked people; but when they drew near to listen to His words, they felt how sinful they were, and they wanted to be made better. Feeling their sins, made them glad to hear of a Saviour.

So Jesus taught them; and when some of them asked Him to their houses, He went and ate with them; for He wanted to make them good.

Then the Scribes and Pharisees complained about it, saying,—"This man receives sinners, and eats with them."

When Jesus knew they were murmuring, He told

them a parable. He said,—"If a man has a hundred sheep, and he lose one of them, he will leave the ninety-nine others in the wilderness, while he goes to look for the one that is lost. And when he

THE LOST SHEEP BROUGHT HOME.

has found it, he takes it up and carries it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

"Then he goes home, and calls all his friends and his neighbors together, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.

"I say unto you, that just in the same way, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that is sorry for his sins."

You see, if the *Pharisees* did not rejoice when a poor publican or sinner turned to God, the angels in heaven did.

Then Jesus told them another very beautiful parable to show how great the love of God is; and how much He loves poor sinners. He said,—

"A certain man had two sons. And after a time the younger son began to get discontented with his happy quiet home; he wanted to leave it, to go away where he could enjoy himself as he liked, and where his father would know nothing of what he was doing.

"So he gathered together all that belonged to him, and all the money that his father had given him, and went into a far country. There he began to lead a wicked, riotous life. He did things he knew to be wrong,—things that he knew would make his father's heart to ache with sorrow. But he did not care about displeasing his father now.

"He thought it would make him happy to have so much liberty, and to have his own way in everything; but he found that sin brought great sorrow; and he was more miserable than he had ever been before.

"Very soon all his money was spent; and besides this, a great famine was in all that land, and he

began to be in want of food. So he asked a man of that city to take him for a servant; and the man sent him into his fields to feed pigs.

"And now he suffered terribly from hunger. He had not enough to eat; so he ate the husks and coarse food that was given to the pigs. And no man gave to him."

How miserable he was! how cold and hungry! how different from what he had been in his father's home.

"At last he thought to himself, how many servants of my father have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and am no more worthy to be called your son: let me be one of your servants.

"And he arose and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had pity, and ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him.

"And the son said to his father, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and am no more worthy to be called your son.

"But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet; and let us make a feast and be merry. For this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.

"So they began to be merry.

"Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what it meant.

"And the servant said, Your brother is come;

THE FATTED CALF.

and your father has made a feast, because he has received him safe and sound.

"Then the elder son was angry, and would not go into the house; so his father came and entreated him.

"But he said to his father, These many years have I served you, and I never disobeyed you in anything: and yet you never made a feast for me, that

I might be merry with my friends. But as soon as this son of yours has come, who has been so wicked, and led such a disgraceful life, you have made a feast for *him*.

"The father answered, Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. It was right that we should make merry and be glad; for your brother was dead and is alive again; and was lost and is found."

Do you understand a little what this parable means? As the father had pity on his son when he hated his evil ways and asked for forgiveness, so God has pity on every poor sinner when he turns from his naughtiness, and prays for pardon. And "there is *joy* in heaven over one sinner that repents."

Is it not true that "God is love?"

CHAPTER XLV.

THE KINDNESS OF JESUS.

WHEREVER Jesus went, He was always doing acts of kindness; He was so tender and compassionate that He could never see suffering without taking it away.

One Sabbath day He was in a synagogue teaching; and a poor woman was there who was bent nearly double. She had been in this sad state for

eighteen years, and she could not hold herself up the least bit. When Jesus saw her, He called her to Him, and said,—

"Woman, you are made well."

And He laid His hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight; and she praised God.

But the ruler of the synagogue was very angry about it, and he spoke crossly to the people. He said,—"There are six days in which men ought to work: come on those days and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day."

Then the Lord said to him,—"You hypocrite!" (a hypocrite is a person who pretends to be good, but who is not at all good) "does not every one of you loose his ox or his ass from the stable, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman to be loosed from such a bondage on the Sabbath day?"

When He had said this His enemies were ashamed. And all the people were very glad and happy because He had done such things.

After this, as He was on His journey, He entered a certain village; and there met Him ten men that were lepers. I have explained to you before what a dreadful disease leprosy was, and how those who had it were never allowed to be with other people. So now these poor lepers as they were coming along with their heads bare, and their clothes torn, were obliged to keep calling out, "Unclean, unclean."

When they saw Jesus, they stood still at some little distance from Him, and lifted up their voices and said,—"Jesus, Master, have mercy on us."

And Jesus did have mercy. At once He said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests."

They turned quickly away to do as they were bid, feeling sure they would be made well; and lo! as they went they were healed.

You would surely think that as soon as they felt health and strength come suddenly into their poor aching diseased bodies, they would fall at the Saviour's feet, and thank Him for His goodness! But, sad to tell, only one out of all the ten showed himself grateful. As soon as he felt that he was healed, he turned back and with a loud voice praised God. Then he fell down on his face at Jesus' feet, giving Him thanks.

And he was a Samaritan—one of those people whom the Jews despised and hated.

Jesus said, "Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? This stranger is the only one who has returned to give glory to God." And He said to the man, "Arise, and go your way; your faith has made you well."

Let us take care that we are not like the nine ungrateful Jews; and let us not forget to thank God every day for all the mercies and blessings He is sending us every day. God loves to listen to the thanks and praises of the little lambs of His flock.

And now I will tell you about some happy little ones who were taken in the Saviour's arms and blessed.

One day some mothers brought their infants to Jesus, that He should bless them; they wanted Him to put His holy hands upon them and pray. They heard the Saviour speaking about His Father,

COURT OF AN EASTERN HOUSE

and about heavenly things; and as they listened to His kind words, and saw all His kind deeds, they thought how much they should like their dear little ones to receive a blessing from such a holy prophet.

So they brought them to Jesus.

But the disciples did not like them to come; they did not like their Master to be troubled by a lot of little children; and they found fault with the moth-

ers, and blamed them, and wanted to send them away. But when Jesus saw it, He was much displeased. He thought His disciples would have known Him better; and He hoped they would have had more of His own spirit of love. So Jesus called them to Him, and said to His disciples,—

"Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

And He took them up in His arms, put His hands gently on their heads and blessed them.

CHAPTER XLVI.

MARTHA AND MARY.

VERY near to Jerusalem there was a village called Bethany, and in that village was a house which belonged to a woman called Martha. She was a good woman, and she loved the Lord Jesus; and whenever He came to Bethany she used to receive Him very gladly into her home.

Now Martha had a sister called Mary, and a brother called Lazarus; and they also loved Jesus very much. And He loved *them:* the Bible tells us that "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus."

When He went to their house, Martha used always to be very busy, preparing the best of everything for Him.

One day Jesus came, and Martha, as usual, was bustling about to get ready some nice food for her holy Guest. While she was doing this, Mary was sitting at the feet of Jesus, listening to His words. She did not care to *move* while He was speaking; she thought she would like to learn at His feet forever.

But in a short time Martha began to get a little cross, as she was making her preparations. She was fretting and fussing too much about what she was doing; and when she saw Mary sitting so quietly at the Saviour's feet, she complained about it to Jesus, and said,—

"Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone?"

I do not think she really wanted Mary to help her, or she would have asked her to do it before; and Mary would never have refused to help. But she was just a little worried and cross, and that made her speak in this way to Jesus.

The Lord knew all that was passing in her poor troubled heart; He knew all the real love that she felt, and the earnest wish she had to give Him of her best; and He knew, too, that she was now a little bit out of temper.

He answered her so kindly; but He did not tell Mary to go and help her!

He said, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: and Mary has chosen that good part which shall not be taken from her."

He meant to say, that it was better to listen to His words than to be so busy (even about good things) as to have no time to sit down quietly at His feet, and learn the lessons He was teaching.

It was the winter time, and there was again another feast in Jerusalem, called the Feast of Dedication. Jesus had been staying in Bethany, and now He walked from this little village, and from Martha's house, to go to the Temple in Jerusalem.

While He was there, the Jews came to Him and said, "How much longer will you make us to doubt? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly."

Jesus answered them, "I have told you, and you did not believe: and the works that I do in My Father's name, *they* tell you that I am the Messiah. But you do not believe, because you are not My sheep. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give them eternal life. I and My Father are one."

That means, "My Father is God, and I am God."

Then the proud and angry Jews took up stones again to throw at Him, but Jesus was not frightened; He said to them,—

CHRIST AT MARY AND MARTHA'S. (233)

"I have shown you many good works from My Father; for which of those works do you want to stone Me?"

The Jews answered, "We do not want to stone you for what you have *done*, but for what you have *said*; and because you call yourself God."

Then they tried to take Him; but His hour was not yet come. So He escaped from them, and left Jerusalem once more, and went into the country beyond Jordan, where He was safe from His enemies.

CHAPTER XLVII.

LAZARUS RAISED TO LIFE.

WHILE Jesus was staying in that country beyond Jordan, Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary, became very ill—so ill that his sisters were afraid he was going to die—and in great distress they sent a message to the Saviour.

This was the message: "Lord, behold he whom you love is sick."

When Jesus heard this, He sent back his answer by the messenger: "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, and that the Son of God should be glorified also."

Though Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and

Lazarus, yet He did not hurry to Bethany when He heard the trouble they were in, but He remained two days longer in the same place where He was.

Was it because He did not care? Oh, no; not that: it was because He wanted to make them trust in Him more, by showing them what He could do.

How the poor sisters must have watched and longed for His coming! But Jesus did not come; and Lazarus got worse and worse, till at last he died.

When two days had passed away, Jesus said to His disciples, "Let us go to Bethany again."

You remember I told you that Bethany was quite close to Jerusalem; and so, when the disciples heard Him say He was going there once more, they were frightened about it, for their Lord's sake; and they said to Him,—

"Master, the Jews tried to stone you such a little time ago, and are you going back there again?"

Jesus said to them, "Our friend Lazarus is sleeping; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep."

Then his disciples said, "Lord, if he is sleeping he will get well."

But Jesus meant that he was dead; and His disciples thought He meant that Lazarus was really resting and sleeping in his bed.

So, now, Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, so that you may believe; but now let us go to him."

Then Thomas said to the other disciples, "The

Jews are sure to kill our Master; but we will go too, that we may die with Him."

When Jesus got near to Bethany, some one told Martha that He was coming, and she ran quickly to meet Him; but Mary sat still in the house.

Then Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

Jesus said to her, "Your brother shall rise again."

Martha answered, "Yes, I know that he will rise again at the last day, when all the dead people shall rise."

But this was not what Jesus meant; so He spoke to her again, and told her that He was Himself The Life, and that He could give life to those that were dead; and He asked her if she believed this?

And Martha answered Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Son of God."

After that, Jesus asked her where Mary was; and so Martha went back to the house and called her sister, secretly, saying, "The Master is come and calls for you."

As soon as Mary heard that, she got up quickly and went to Him.

Why did Martha call her sister so secretly? It was because a great many Jews from Jerusalem were sitting with them in the house; and the sisters knew how the Jews hated Jesus and wanted to kill Him, so they were afraid of letting them know that He had come back.

The Jews had gone to the house of Martha and Mary to comfort them after their brother's death; for Lazarus had now been dead four days, and he was lying in the grave. When the Jews saw Mary jump up so quickly and go out, they followed her, saying,—

"She is going to the grave to weep there."

When Mary came to the place where Jesus was, she fell down at his feet, and said to Him just what Martha had said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

When Jesus saw her crying, and the Jews also crying which came with her, He groaned, and was much troubled.

"Where have you laid him?" He asked.

They said to Him, "Lord, come and see."

Jesus wept. The sight of their grief and sadness so touched His heart, that He could not bear to see it; and though He knew He was going to make them happy and thankful again, yet, now, while they were weeping, He wept too, and the tears ran down His cheeks.

When the Jews saw it, they said, "See! how much He must have loved His friend.' And others said, "Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have made Lazarus well again?"

Jesus groaned again. And now by this time they had come to the grave. It was in a hole in a rock, where they had laid the dead body of Lazarus, and a large stone was before the hole.

Jesus said, "Take away the stone."

But now Martha spoke. She thought it would be dreadful if the stone were taken away, and she said, "Lord, by this time it is too late, for he has been dead four days."

Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you would believe, you should see the glory of God?"

Then they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard Me; and I know that you hear Me always."

When He had said these words, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!"

At this moment, while the people were all looking in silent awe and wonder at the open grave, Lazarus, who had been lying there dead for four days, rose up and walked out of it! His hands and feet were tied round with grave-clothes, and a cloth was round his face.

Jesus said, "Undo the clothes, and let him go."

How joyful, and how thankful, the sisters were to receive their dear brother back to life again! He was not looking weak and pale, as he had done before he died,—he was now in sound and perfect health.

What a wonderful miracle Jesus had done! Many of the Jews which saw it believed on Jesus after that; but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what He had done; and when they heard about it, they wanted the more to kill Him. And they

wanted to kill Lazarus, too, because, owing to him, so many people believed in Jesus.

So the Saviour could not walk about amongst the Jews any more after that. He went away to a quiet little town near the wilderness, called Ephraim; and there He remained with His disciples till it was time to take His last journey to Jerusalem.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

ON THE WAY TO JERUSALEM.

A FEW quiet weeks of rest had passed away, and now the time had come when Jesus must leave the little town of Ephraim. As He set out on His last journey to Jerusalem, He knew quite well all that was going to happen to Him there; yet He steadfastly set His face to go and bear it.

He walked on in front of His disciples, thinking of all the agony and shame that were before Him; yet He was willing, and even eager, to bear the sorrow and the pain, because of His great love for sinful men. As the Twelve followed their loved Master, they were amazed and frightened.

Presently Jesus called them to Him, and began to explain to them more plainly than He had done before, all that He was to suffer. He told them that He

would be betrayed into the hands of the chief priests and scribes, and that they would condemn Him to death, and mock Him, and beat Him with whips, and spit upon Him, and, at last, crucify Him. And the third day He would rise again.

It seems so strange that when their Lord had told them this, they could have thought of themselves at all; but just at this very time, two of the disciples—James and John—made a request which showed that great selfishness was still in their hearts, and that they were thinking a great deal about themselves. They seemed quite to have forgotten what Jesus had taught them but a very short time before; and they wanted to be *first* again.

They came to Jesus and said, "Master, we want you to do something for us, that we are going to ask."

Jesus said, "What is it you want Me to do for you?"

They answered, "Grant that we may sit, one on your right hand and the other on your left, in your glory."

But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Can you bear all the suffering that I am going to endure?"

They said to Him, "We can."

Jesus answered, "You shall indeed bear sorrow and pain like Me; but to sit on My right hand and on My left, is only for those for whom My Father has prepared it."

When the ten heard what James and John had been saying, they were very angry with the two brothers.

But Jesus began to teach them again, as he had done before, that the way to be really great is to be humble and unselfish; even as He himself had come, not to be waited on, but to serve others, and to give His own Life that He might save men from Satan.

While they were still on their way, walking and talking, they came to a town called Jericho And a certain blind man sat by the wayside, begging. A great crowd of people had begun to follow Jesus by this time; and as the blind man heard the tramp of so many feet passing, he asked what it meant.

And they told him that "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by."

Then he cried out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

When he called Jesus the Son of David, he showed that he believed Him to be the Messiah.

But the people blamed him for crying out, and told him to be quiet. However, he cried so much the more, "O Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Then Jesus stood still and told the people to bring the blind man to Him. And they went to him and said, "Be of good comfort, rise! He calls you."

So the blind man got up quickly and came to Jesus.

Then the Saviour asked him, "What do you wish Me to do for you?"

The blind man said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight."

And Jesus said, "Receive your sight: your faith has saved you." And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus, praising and blessing God.

In that same town of Jericho lived a man, whose name was Zacchæus. He was a publican—a man who collected money for the king—and he was very rich. But he had not made his money honestly. When he was collecting for the king he collected a great deal for himself, and made himself rich by cheating poor people and robbing them of money.

Well, this man wished very much to see Jesus as he was passing through; but he could not, for so many people were round Him, and Zacchæus was a very little man. So he ran on in front and climbed up into a tree to see Him: for he knew that Jesus was to pass that way.

When the Lord came to the place He looked up and saw him; and He called him by name, saying, "Zacchæus, make haste and come down; for to-day I must stay in your house."

What a surprise this was for Zacchæus! He had not expected to be noticed at all, and now Jesus is actually going to his house, though he is a despised and hated publican. Feeling how greatly he was

honored by the Holy Prophet, he made haste and came down from the tree, and received Him joyfully.

But now the people began to murmur when they saw where Jesus had gone. It was the old complaint: "He is gone to be a guest with a man that is a sinner."

But Jesus came to seek and to save sinners. He knew that the heart of Zacchæus was not quite hard and bad; and that love and kindness would win him to a better life.

And so it was. For while Jesus was sitting in his house, the rich publican repented of all his wicked cheating ways, and determined to live honestly in the future. He stood up and told Jesus what he was going to do. He had taken a great deal of money from the poor, and now he was sorry for it, and said,—

"Lord, I will give half of my goods to the poor; and to those people whom I have cheated I will give four times as much as I have robbed them of."

And Jesus was pleased. He saw that Zacchæus was in earnest, and that he was a changed man. So he said,—

"This day is salvation come to this house."

The Holy Spirit was now in the publican's heart; and Jesus gave him everlasting life.

CHAPTER XLIX.

JUDAS.

THE Lord Jesus had now come to Bethany again, on His way to Jerusalem; and He went into Martha's house. How joyfully they must have welcomed the blessed Saviour, who had done such great things for them, and who had made their home so happy once more by raising their brother Lazarus from the dead!

It was the Sabbath evening when He and His disciples arrived there; and the brother and sisters made Him a supper.

Now a great many of the Jews knew that Jesus was there: and they came to Martha's house too, not only to see Him, but that they might see Lazarus also, who had been dead, but was now alive again.

As usual, Martha prepared the evening meal and waited upon her guests; but Lazarus sat at the table with Jesus.

And what did Mary do? She loved the Lord so much that she wanted to do something to show her love. She had a box of very expensive and very precious ointment; and she took this alabaster box and broke it, and poured the precious ointment over

His head and feet as he sat at supper; and then she wiped His feet with her hair. And the whole house was filled with the delicious perfume.

But there was one sitting at the table who could not bear to see what Mary had done—it was that wicked, covetous Judas. He loved money better than he loved his Master—better than he loved anything in the world; and now he asked, in great displeasure,—

"Why was this waste of the ointment made? Why was it not sold? We might have got three hundred pence for it" (that is about ten pounds), "and then we could have given the money to the poor."

Judas did not really care for the poor; but he was a thief, and he wanted the money that he might keep it for himself. All the disciples used to keep their money in one bag, and they gave this bag to Judas to take care of; but he used to steal some of the money out of it. Yet no one knew that he was a thief except Jesus.

When the Lord heard him complaining of what Mary had done, He said to him, "Let her alone; why do you trouble her? for she has done a good work on Me. For you have the poor always with you, and whenever you like you may do them good; but you have not Me with you always."

And then Jesus said to them all, "Truly I say unto you that wherever this Gospel shall be preached

in the whole world, this story of what she has done shall be told too."

But the love of money was so strong in the selfish, greedy heart of Judas, that he was willing to commit any sin to get it. And now Satan entered into his heart, and made him think a horrible thought. He knew that the chief priests were wanting to kill his Master, and he felt sure that they would give him some money if he told them how they might take Him without the people knowing, and without any noise being made.

Oh, why did Judas listen to Satan's dreadful whispers? Why did he not pray to God to help him to cast the devil out, and to make his heart clean again? But no; instead of doing that, he was in a hurry to do the devil's will; he went away from Bethany that very night, and walked to Jerusalem to find the chief priests. Then he said to them,—

"What will you give me if I deliver Him up to you?"

The proud priests and Pharisees were very glad to find that one of the Twelve was willing to help them to take Jesus; so they made a bargain to give him thirty pieces of silver—that is nearly four pounds.

Then Judas promised to betray his Lord; and from that time he was watching for an opportunity to deliver him into the hands of his enemies.

CHAPTER L.

A DAY OF TRIUMPH.

THE day after that supper, when Mary poured the precious ointment over the Saviour's feet, Jesus left Bethany to go to Jerusalem. He had not much longer to live now; in five days He would be hanging on the Cross. But He had a great deal yet to do before He laid down His pure and holy life.

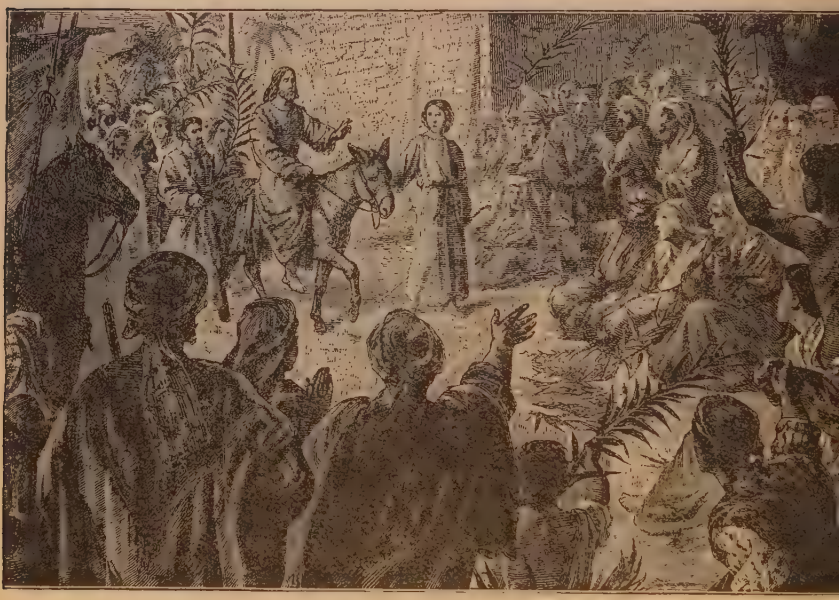
When they had gone a little way out of Bethany Jesus said to two of His disciples, "Go into the village a little further on, and as soon as you have got there you will find a young ass tied, on which no one has ever sat: loose him and bring him to me. And if any one shall say to you, Why are you doing this? you shall answer, The Lord has need of him; and he will let you take him at once."

So the disciples went as they were told, and everything happened just as Jesus had said. They found the colt tied by a door; and as they were loosing him some people said, "Why are you taking the colt away?"

The disciples answered, "The Lord wants him." And they brought the colt to Jesus.

Now a great many people had heard that the Prophet of Nazareth was coming to Jerusalem; and they went in crowds to meet Him, carrying palm-branches in their hands. Then they spread their garments on the young ass and set Jesus upon him; and they also

spread their clothes on the ground, and cut down branches from the trees and scattered them along the way for Jesus to pass over. And the whole multitude began to rejoice, and to praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen.



JESUS ENTERING JERUSALEM.

They said, "Hosanna! blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord."

Some of the Pharisees were amongst the crowd, and they did not at all like to hear the people praising Jesus and calling Him King; so they said, "Master, rebuke your disciples—don't let them say this."

But Jesus would not stop them.

And now, as they had got to the top of the hill, all at once they saw the beautiful city lying before them; and as Jesus looked down upon it, He wept. They were not silent tears, such as He shed at the grave of Lazarus; *now* the Saviour wept bitterly—He *wept aloud.*

Why did He weep? was it at the thought of all the dreadful suffering He would have to bear there, in a few days? No; it was not for Himself He wept, but for the people who were living in that place which was called the "holy city," though it was so unholy. He had taught there, He had preached, He had done miracles, but they would not receive Him; He had often longed to gather the children together. as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, but the people would not let Him; and now they were going to kill Him; and He knew that God would severely punish that wicked city, for shedding the blood of His well-beloved Son.

The Saviour knew all this; and it was for *their* sorrows—not for His own—that He shed those holy tears of deep compassion.

Jerusalem was very full of people at that time, for the Passover was close at hand, and they had come from all parts of the country to keep the feast; and now, as Jesus came into the city riding on the ass, and accompanied by such a crowd praising God, the people wondered and asked, "Who is this?"

And the multitude answered, "This is Jesus, the Prophet of Nazareth."

Then Jesus went into the Temple. And what did He see there? Just the same disgraceful scenes that made Him so angry three years before. There were the cattle that were to be killed at the Passover in the large outer court of God's house—there were the cages of doves—there were the tables of the money-changers.

Jesus could not endure to see it all, and He would not suffer them to remain there; so again He drove them all out, both the cattle, and those who bought and sold them; and He upset the tables of the money-changers, and threw down the seats of those who sold the doves.

"It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer," He said; "but you have made it a den of thieves."

When He had thus cleansed the house of God—*His own house* for the second time, the blind and the lame came to Him there, and He healed them.

And the little children began to sing praises to Him, and to say, "Hosanna to the Son of David."

But when the chief priests and scribes heard them they were exceedingly displeased, and they said to Jesus, "Do you hear what these children are saying?"

And Jesus said, "Yes. God accepts the praises of even little infants."

Jesus liked to listen to their little voices, and He

THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

would not tell them to be silent; for He loved little children *then*, and He loves them *now*.

When it was evening, Jesus went out of the city, back to Bethany again, and lodged there. And the Twelve were with Him; even the traitor Judas, who was only thinking all the time how he might help the chief priests to take his Master, that so he might get the thirty pieces of silver for himself.

CHAPTER LI.

THE LAST SUPPER.—I.

FOR two days more Jesus taught in the Temple; and all that time the chief priests, the rulers, and the scribes, were trying how they might destroy Him; but they did not know how to manage it, for all the people were very attentive to hear Him.

Then came the day when the Passover Feast began; and Jesus said to Peter and John,—"Go and prepare a supper that we may eat the Passover."

But they said to Him,—"Where do you wish us to prepare it?" for they did not know of any house in Jerusalem where they might go.

Jesus said to them,—"Go into the city, and you shall meet a servant carrying a pitcher—or large jug—of water: follow him into the house. And you

THE LAST SUPPER. (253)

shall say to the man who owns that house, 'The Master says to you, Where is the room where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?' And he will show you a large room upstairs; there make ready."

So Peter and John went to Jerusalem, and they saw the man carrying a pitcher, just as Jesus had said; and they followed him into the house, and asked the master of that house to show them a room where they might prepare a supper for their Lord.

Then he took them upstairs, and showed them a large room, where was a table with seats all around it; and there Peter and John got everything ready.

When it was evening, Jesus came to that house with His twelve disciples; and they went upstairs, and all sat down. It was a very sad, and a very solemn time; for this was the last meal Jesus would eat before His death; and as they placed themselves at the table, He said to them,—

"I have greatly longed to eat this passover with you before I suffer."

But even here, and at such a solemn time as this, the disciples again began to quarrel and dispute amongst themselves, which should be the greatest! They were proud and selfish still; and *so* slow to learn the lessons that their gracious Lord was always teaching them.

Before, He reproved them by gentle words: but *now* He taught them by loving deeds.

You must remember that in that hot country peo-

ple used to wear sandals, and not boots and shoes; and the feet used to get very dusty and uncomfortable after walking; so, in every house a basin and water were provided, that people might have their feet washed when they took off their sandals before sitting down to their meals.

In this large upper room where Jesus was now, the basin and the water were all in readiness; but there were no servants to wash their feet for them. So, what did Jesus do?

Though He was God's own Son, He took the servant's place. He rose up from supper, and took a towel, and tied it round His waist. Then He poured some water in a basin, and stooped down, and began to wash His disciples' feet, and to wipe them with a towel.*

The Apostles would not have done this for each other; they were too proud and jealous. But what must they have thought—how ashamed they must have felt—when their Lord, the Messiah Himself, could so humble Himself for their sakes! I think they must have felt too full of shame and wonder just at first to say a word; but when Jesus came to Peter, he could not help asking in great surprise,—

* That the washing of the disciples' feet took place before, and not after the meal, is evident. "The words 'Supper being ended,' in John, xiii. 2, are a mistranslation, and should be, 'Supper being ready' or 'having come;' the Greek word is the same as is used by Matthew to express 'when the evening *was come*.'"—EUGENE STOCK.

HE BEGAN TO WASH HIS DISCIPLES' FEET.

"Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

Jesus answered, "You do not understand now what I am doing; but I will explain it to you presently."

Peter said, "You shall never wash my feet."

But Jesus answered, "If I do not wash you, you cannot belong to Me."

It was very dreadful to Peter to think that he could not belong to Jesus; and he said so earnestly, "Lord, wash my hands and my head, as well as my feet."

Jesus said, "He who is bathed only needs to have his feet washed, for he is quite clean. And you, My disciples, are clean; but not all of you."

Jesus meant that He had made their *hearts* clean, and had washed their sins away. But the heart of Judas was black, and full of sin, and that is why Jesus said, "You are not all clean."

So after He had washed their feet, and taken off the towel from His waist, and had sat down at the table again, He began to explain to them why He had done this.

He said, "Do you understand what I have been doing? You call Me Master, and Lord: and you say well; for so I am. If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you ought also to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you."

Ah! I think they began to understand now, that if they would be like their Lord, unselfish, loving and humble, there would never again be any dispute amongst them as to which should be the greatest.

CHAPTER LII.

THE LAST SUPPER.—II.

THEY were still at supper—Jesus and His twelve disciples—when the Lord began to be much troubled and very sad. He was thinking of Judas, the traitor, to whom He had been so loving and kind; to whom He had given power to heal the sick and cast out devils; who had been with Him so long, and whom He had called His friend; and He could not help grieving as He thought of his unkindness and hypocrisy, and of the awful sin he was going to commit.

At last Jesus began to speak about it. He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you will betray Me, and will give Me up to the chief priests to be killed."

At these words, all the disciples (except Judas) were greatly shocked, and very sorrowful; and they looked round at each other, wondering of whom He spoke. And one by one they began asking Jesus,—"Lord, is it I?" But Jesus did not answer.

Now John was sitting next to Jesus, with his head leaning on the Saviour's bosom; and Jesus loved John more than all the others. So Peter made a sign to him that he should ask their Lord who it was that would do this dreadful thing.

Then John, lying on Jesus' breast, whispered, and said to Him, "Lord, who is it?"

And Jesus replied in the same low whisper, "He

RECLINING AT MEALS.

to whom I shall give a morsel of bread, when I have dipped it."

Then Jesus took a slice of bread, and dipped it in a dish of sauce that was on the table, and gave it to Judas. So John knew now who it was that was so wicked; but no one else knew, except, perhaps, Peter.

And after the sop, Satan entered into Judas, and

never left him again! It almost seems as if the Saviour could no longer bear to have that false and faithless apostle in the room, for now He said to him,—

"Do quickly what you are going to do."

Then Judas got up, immediately after he had eaten the sop that Jesus had given him, and went out. And none of the others knew why Jesus had said this to him: they thought that perhaps He had told him to buy something for the feast, or to give something to the poor; for, you remember, I told you that Judas kept the bag in which was all the money that belonged to Jesus and the other disciples.

But where did Judas go? He went to the chief priests and scribes, to ask them to send some men with him to take his Master.

Before the supper was ended, Jesus took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, saying, "This is My body, which is given for you; eat this, and think of Me." Afterwards He took the cup, and poured out some wine, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My blood, which is shed for you: drink this, and think of Me."

Jesus did not mean that the bread and wine were really His body and blood; but He wished to teach them, that just as the bread had been broken, and the wine poured out, so His body would be broken, and His blood poured out for them, and for all sinful men.

After that they sang a hymn; and then they all left that large upper room, and went out of the house, through the streets, towards the Mount of Olives. As they walked along, Jesus said to them,—

"You will all leave Me to-night. I shall be taken, and you will all go, and leave Me alone."

Then Peter said, "Lord, I shall never leave you. I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death."

Jesus said to him, "I tell you, Peter, that this night, before the cock crows, you will say three times that you do not know Me."

Peter could not believe that he would be so wicked, and he said very earnestly, "If I should *die* with you, I will never say that I do not know you."

And so said all the disciples; but they did not know themselves as well as their Lord knew them!

Then Jesus began talking so very kindly to them. He said, "I am going away from you, but do not let your hearts be troubled. I am going to heaven to prepare a place for you; and when I have prepared a place for you, I will come again and take you to Myself, that you may be with me always.

"I will not leave you without comfort; my Father will send you the Holy Spirit; and I will give you My peace, which is better than anything the world can give you. And now I give you a commandment, and that is, that you love one another as I have

loved you. You are my *friends*, if you do what I command you.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it to you. For the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came from God."

After these loving words, Jesus prayed to God; and it was such a tender, beautiful prayer. He prayed for His disciples, that they might be kept from all the evil that is in the world, and that they might be made holy. And He prayed also for all those all over the world, who should believe on Him in the years to come.

So we know that our blessed Lord will pray for us too, if we love Him, and believe His holy word.

CHAPTER LIII.

IN THE GARDEN.

IT was night, and by the time Jesus had finished talking with His disciples, they had come to a pleasant, quiet spot, called Gethsemane. It was a garden, and was about half a mile beyond the city. Jesus used often to go there with the Twelve; and wicked Judas also knew the place well, and it was to this

garden, this very night, he was going to bring the men to take Jesus.

And now the Saviour said to His disciples, "Sit down here, while I go and pray a little further on."

But He took with Him Peter, and James, and John (the three who had seen His glory in the Mount, when He was transfigured before them, were to see

GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE.

also His agony in the garden), and He began to be sorrowful and very much distressed.

"I am exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death," Jesus said to them; "stay here and watch with Me; and pray while I am praying."

And He went a little farther, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this dreadful burden from Me; but let it be as *you* will, not as *I* will."

What was the burden that He found so dreadful? Was it the thought of the cruel death He was so soon to die? No; it was the burden of *sin* He found so very agonizing—so very terrible. You remember, I have told you before, that Jesus came to bear our sins, and sorrows, and weaknesses; and He came also to bear the punishment of our sins His own self, in His own body, on the cross.

So it was the burden of OUR sins that caused Him such awful suffering in the garden, and almost killed Him.* And now Satan came to Him again to tempt Him; and the Saviour's heart was almost broken. No one before, or since, has ever suffered so much as the Saviour suffered then.

When Jesus had prayed, He came back to the three disciples, to see if they were thinking of Him, and were watching with Him. But they were fast asleep! Then He said to Peter, "What, are you sleeping? Could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, that you do not fall into sin."

And He went away again the second time, and prayed to His Father to help Him in His great sorrow. Then He came again to His disciples, but they were again asleep; for their eyes were heavy; and they, too, were very sad.

This time Jesus did not wake them. He left them, and went away again; and being in an agony He prayed more earnestly; and He was so unhappy

* "Even unto death."

that drops of blood came out on His face and fell down to the ground. But He ended His prayer (as He had ended it each time before) by saying, "Father, let Your will, not Mine, be done."

Did His Father help Him? Yes; God sent an angel down to Him, to strengthen and to comfort Him.

VIEW OF THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE.

And when He rose up from prayer, He went to His disciples, who were still sleeping, and said to them, "The hour is come, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise up, for Judas, who betrays Me, is quite near."

And immediately, while He was yet speaking,

came Judas, and with Him a great multitude, with swords, and sticks, and lanterns, from the chief priests and Pharisees. These men did not know Jesus by sight; so Judas had given them a sign by which they might know Him. He said to them,—

"The one that I shall kiss is Jesus; mind you hold him fast and lead him away safely."

So Judas hurried into the garden, and went up to

THE BETRAYAL.

Jesus, and said, "Master, Master," and kissed Him.

But Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of man with a kiss?"

The other people had not yet come up, and Jesus, knowing everything that was going to happen, went to meet them, and then He asked them, "For whom are you looking?"

They answered Him, "Jesus of Nazareth."

Jesus said unto them, "I am He."

As soon as He had said to them, "I am He," they all went backward and fell to the ground. They could not help it; it was a power from God that made them fall down before His well-beloved Son.

Then again Jesus asked them, "For whom are you looking?"

And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth."

Jesus answered, "I have told you that I am He; so if you want Me, let My disciples go away safely."

But Peter had a sword, and he wanted to fight; he struck a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. Then Jesus said to Peter,—

"Put away your sword again. Do you think that My Father would not send many thousands of angels to help Me, if I were to pray to Him for them?"

And Jesus put out his hand and touched the man's ear, and healed him. Is it not beautiful to see how He thought of others, and did deeds of kindness, and love, and mercy to the end?

And Jesus said to the chief priests and captains who were come to take Him, "Are you come out as against a thief, with swords and sticks to take Me? I was with you every day in the Temple teaching, and you did not touch me there; but this is your hour, and the power of darkness."

Then all the disciples forsook Him, and fled. Peter, James, and John, and all the others ran away,

THE ARREST IN THE GARDEN. (269)

and left their blessed Master in the hands of His cruel enemies, who hated Him.

And the wicked people bound the Saviour's hands with ropes, and led Him out of the garden, back to Jerusalem.

CHAPTER LIV.

PETER'S DENIAL.

IT was already midnight when the band of officers and servants hurried Jesus away from the Garden of Gethsemane. They took Him straight to the palace of the high priest, where they were all sitting up, longing for Jesus to be brought in; and a great many of the chief priests, and elders, and scribes, were there also.

At last the soldiers and servants came in, bringing Jesus with them, with His hands tied behind his back; and all the wicked people were very glad to see Him in their power.

They at once began to ask Him questions, that they might try and find some excuse for putting Him to death; and the high priest asked Him about His disciples, and what He had taught.

Jesus answered, "I have always taught openly in the world, and in the Temple before the Jews; why do you not ask those who heard Me, what I said to them? for they know what I said."

BEHOLD THE MAN. (271)

Then a rude, wicked man struck the holy Saviour with his hand, and said roughly, "Why do you speak to the high priest like that?"

Was Jesus angry?

No; He bore it so meekly. He only said, "If I have spoken wrongly, tell me about it; but if well, why do you strike me?"

Then the high priest asked Him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of God?"

Jesus answered, "I am, and one day you will see me coming in the clouds with the holy angels."

Then the high priest said, "Hear how wickedly He talks! He calls Himself the Son of God; what ought to be done to Him?"

And all the people answered, "He ought to be killed."

After that they began to treat Him shamefully. They spit in His holy face, they struck Him with rods and hit him with their fists, and they mocked Him, and laughed at Him. They tied a cloth over his eyes and then they struck Him on the face, and the servants slapped Him and pushed Him about, and spoke rudely and wickedly to Him.

And Jesus bore it all, because He loved us so much.

But where were the disciples all this time?

I told you that when their blessed Master was taken, and when the soldiers had tied His hands behind Him, the eleven apostles were so frightened that they ran away and left Him. They had said

that they would die with Him, and that they would never leave Him; yet see how soon they forgot their promises, and only thought of saving themselves!

But presently two of them—Peter and John—began to be ashamed of having left their dear Lord; and they wanted, too, to know what was going to be done to Him; so they followed Jesus (keeping a long way behind) into the high priest's grand house or palace.

It was a very cold, frosty night, and all the servant of the high priests and the soldiers were sitting or standing round the fire; and when Peter came in he sat down with them and warmed himself. We are not told where John was; but very likely he went into the inner room, where Jesus was, that he might hear all that was being said to his dear Master.

As Peter was sitting by the fire, a maid looked at him very earnestly, and said,—

"You are one of Jesus' disciples."

But Peter was afraid to say he belonged to Jesus; he was afraid to tell the truth, and so he said, "No I am not His disciple; I do not know Him."

He felt very unhappy, and very much frightened; and after he had told this sad untruth before them all, he got up, and went outside the door.

And now another maid saw him, and said, "I am quite sure this fellow was with Jesus."

But Peter told a lie again. He spoke angrily and said, "I tell you I don't know the man."

Then Peter went back to the fire again, and after some time, a man said to him, "Did I not see you in the garden with Jesus?"

And now Peter began to use bad words, and to say, "I don't know what you mean! I tell you I don't know the man you are talking about!"

And that moment the cock crew.

Through an open door Jesus could be seen standing before the proud and wicked men, and now, as soon as Peter had heard the cock crow, he looked quickly up at Jesus, and the Lord turned and looked at Peter.

It was a look of such love, and yet of sorrow, and of pity too. It seemed to say, "Is this My friend who said he would die for Me?" Jesus loved Peter so much that it pained Him to hear him say he did not know his Master; but Jesus knew how sorry Peter would be for it afterwards, and this was why He felt so much pity for him.

When Peter saw his Lord look at him so lovingly and so sadly, he felt as if his heart would break. He remembered how Jesus had said to him, only a few hours before, "I tell you, Peter, this night, before the cock crows, you will say three times that you do not know Me," and as Peter thought of this, he went out of the house and wept bitterly.

He was ashamed of his wickedness and cowardice; and oh! he was so very, very sorry that he had denied his blessed Master, and had said he did not

know Him. For Peter did indeed love Him dearly, but Satan had tempted him to be so naughty and unkind.

CHAPTER LV.

JESUS BEFORE PILATE.

ALL through that dreadful night the Saviour had no rest from His enemies. Till the morning came, they never ceased to torment, and ill-treat, and mock Him. They were impatient to have Him killed, but they could not put Him to death without the consent of Pontius Pilate, the Governor, and they could not go to his house yet, because he would not be up.

However, as soon as it was morning, and they knew that Pilate would be sitting on his judgment-seat, and ready to receive them, the chief priests and scribes, and a number of people took Jesus with them to Pilate's house, and the Saviour was led into the judgment-hall; but all His enemies remained outside.

When Pilate looked at Jesus and saw that pure and holy face, he could not believe that He had ever done anything wrong; so he went outside and said to the people,—

"What has he done?"

They answered, "He calls Himself Christ, a King, and He ought to die."

Pilate was surprised to hear this. He went back into the judgment-hall, where Jesus was meekly standing. There He was, a prisoner, with His hands fast tied behind Him; on His face were the marks of the blows He had received, and the shameful spitting that He could not wipe away: could this meek sufferer be a *king?*

"Are you a king?" Pilate asked.

Jesus said, "I am; but My kingdom is not of this world."

Pilate then went out to the people again, and said, "I find no fault at all."

But the people were very fierce and angry; they cried out, "He goes all about the country teaching, and He stirs up the people. He must be crucified."

When Pilate saw how the people hated Him, he was willing to content them; and so, though he knew the blessed Saviour was without fault, yet he gave Him up to some soldiers to be cruelly beaten with knotted ropes. This was a very dreadful punishment, and was called scourging; and often people died while they were being scourged, because of the intense pain.

After they had scourged Jesus, the soldiers put a purple robe over His bleeding back, pretending to dress Him like a king; then they platted a crown of thorns and pressed it down on His head till the blood ran down His face; for the thorns were sharp like pins. Then they mocked Him, and said,—

"Hail, King of the Jews!"

After that they spit on Him, and struck Him on the head with a stick.

Pilate was an unjust judge, and very wicked to let an innocent man be so shamefully treated; but he could not help being sorry for the Holy One who bore it all without a murmur, and he wanted to save Him from being killed.

He thought that if he showed Him to the people now, all bleeding, and tortured, and worn out with the torments He had endured for so many hours, that they would be satisfied, and would not wish to put Him to any more pain. So Pilate sent out and said to them,—

"See, I bring Him out to you that you may know I find no fault in Him."

Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said to them, "Behold the man!"

But when the chief priests and officers saw Him, had they any pity?

No. They were like savage beasts. They cried out,—

"Away with Him! Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"

Pilate said, "You take Him, then, and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him."

The Jews answered, "We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He calls Himself the Son of God."

ON THE ROAD TO CALVARY. (279)

When Pilate heard that, he was afraid. He went back into the judgment-hall, and said to Jesus, "Where do you come from?"

But the Saviour gave him no answer.

Then Pilate said, "Why do you not speak to me? Don't you know that I have power to crucify you, and I have power to let you go free?"

Jesus answered, "You could have no power at all over Me unless it were given you by God; therefore, he that delivered Me up to you has the greater sin."

From that time Pilate tried all he could to release Jesus; but the people cried out the more violently,—

"Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"

"What! shall I crucify your King?" Pilate asked.

"He is not our King!" they shouted.

And Pilate was afraid of displeasing the people—he was afraid to be just; he knew that Jesus had done no wrong, yet because the people would not be satisfied until they had killed Him, he at last gave Jesus up to them to be crucified.

THE WAY OF THE CROSS. (281)

CHAPTER LVI.

THE DEATH OF JUDAS.

JUDAS had betrayed his gracious Master—had sold Him—for thirty pieces of silver. Jesus was going to be put to a most cruel and shameful death, and Judas was one of those who had helped the wicked people to take Him. Was Judas happy now?

He had got the money for which he had committed such a horrible sin; was he contented with his bargain? He had served his *real* master, the devil, very faithfully; did he find him as kind and gentle as the holy Saviour?

Oh, no; Satan is a hard and cruel master. He likes to lead people into sin and suffering; he likes to tempt them to do wickedly, and then he is glad when they are miserable, and driven to despair.

So it was with Judas. When he saw that Jesus was condemned to death, he repented of what he had done; the thirty silver pieces had brought him no happiness—he hated the sight of them.

"Oh, how I wish I had never taken that money!" he thought; "how I wish I had never betrayed my Lord, and had not let the soldiers into the garden to take Him."

He felt he could not keep the money; he could not bear to touch it, because he had done such a wicked

thing to get it; so he took the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders in the Temple, and said to them,—

"I have sinned—I have done very wickedly—because I have betrayed my good and innocent Master."

They answered him scornfully: "What is that to us? That is your affair, not ours."

They saw how miserably wretched the poor traitor was, but they did not feel the least pity for him. They had found him useful in helping them to take the Prophet of Nazareth, whom they hated, and they had paid him for it, and now they did not want to have anything more to do with him.

Ah! why did not the unhappy Judas go to his blessed Master? *He* would not have spoken scornful words to him; *He* would not have sent him away in misery. Judas had heard Him say: "Those who come to Me, I will in no wise cast out." He had heard Him also say, "Come unto Me, all you who are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

Judas was heavy laden; why did he not go to Jesus, and confess his sin, and pray to be forgiven?

The reason was this: though he was sorry he had sinned against his Master, yet he did not *love* Him, and he never had loved Him. He could not have "wept bitterly," as Peter did, if his Lord had looked at him with sad and loving eyes. The Saviour's love had never touched his heart.

You remember, Jesus Himself had said of Judas that he was a devil.

But now I must finish this sad story of the traitor.

When the chief priests had given him their scornful answer, he dashed down the pieces of silver in the Temple, and went quickly out. But he could not rest—Satan would not let him rest—till he had tempted him to commit another fearful sin.

He got a rope, and hurried into a field; then he climbed up a tree, and fastened one end of the rope round a branch, and the other end round his neck. When he had done this he threw himself down from the tree, and was left hanging.

Judas had killed himself!

It was now too late to pray to God for pardon—He was dead! He died unforgiven, and so he went to that dreadful place prepared for the devil and for wicked spirits; he went to hell.

CHAPTER LVII.

JESUS ON THE CROSS.

SO the wicked people had got their own way at last, and Pilate, the unjust governor, had given orders that the Saviour should be crucified. When once they had got permission to put the Lord to death, they were in a great hurry to have it done; for their hearts were harder than a stone.

JESUS ON THE CROSS. (285)

But first of all they took from Jesus the purple robe which they had put on Him to mock Him, and they put His own clothes on Him; then they led Him away to Calvary—the place where He was to be nailed to the cross.

Two other men—thieves—were to be crucified at the same time; and each had to carry his own cross to the appointed place. But the cross was heavy, and the Saviour was very weak. The thieves could carry their crosses; but the burden was more than Jesus could bear.

For see what sufferings He had gone through! It was only the evening before that He had taken His last supper with His disciples; but think of the dreadful agony in the garden after that, when great drops of blood came out from His skin, and fell on the ground! Then remember how the wicked people had come to the garden and taken Him away to the high priest; and how all that night He had had no sleep nor rest, but had been standing before them while they treated Him so disgracefully. Remember again, how they had taken Him, the first thing in the morning, to Pilate, who had ordered Him to be cruelly scourged with knotted ropes.

Was it any wonder, then, that His strength was all gone? and that the heavy wooden cross was more than He could bear?

So as He could not carry it Himself, the sol-

diers caught a man called Simon, who was coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross that he might bear it after Jesus.

A great crowd of people followed the Saviour to Calvary. There were His enemies, who were rejoic-

JESUS SINKS BENEATH THE WEIGHT.

ing at the thought of His coming death; and there were a great many women, who grieved and cried a great deal, because the great Prophet and kind Teacher was going to die.

In all His pain and weakness, Jesus could yet

care for these women who were pitying Him so much. He turned to them and said,—

"Do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children; for the time is not far off when great troubles and sorrows will come to this city, and you will wish to die because you will be so unhappy."

It was for the wickedness of that city, and because the people hated His own beloved Son, that God was going in a few years to send them a fearful punishment.

When they were come to the place of crucifixion, the soldiers took off the Saviour's clothes, and made Him lie down on the cross. Then they stretched out His arms, and hammered large nails through His hands to fasten them to the wood; and other large nails they fastened through His feet. When this was done, they lifted up the cross, and fixed one end of it firmly into a hole made in the ground.

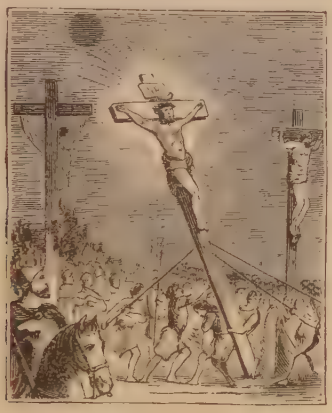
The two thieves were crucified at the same time, one on each side of Jesus; and then the soldiers took the clothes of Jesus and of the other two, and divided them amongst themselves.

When people were crucified, it was the custom to write upon the cross, the crime—or fault—for which they had been put to death; but as Jesus had done no wrong, Pilate gave an order that these words should be written over His head:—

"JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS."

The Jews did not like this at all; and they wanted Pilate to have it taken down; but he would not alter it.

While the Saviour was hanging on the cross, feeling the most intense pain in every part of His holy body, what do you think He did? He prayed for those who were causing Him to die such an agonizing death!



THE CRUCIFIXION.

"Father, forgive them," He said; "for they do not know what they do."

And all the people stood watching. The chief priests and elders and scribes were there, too; and they began mocking and laughing at Jesus. They said,—

"He saved others; let Him save Himself, and come down from the cross, if He is the Son of God."

Even one of the thieves mocked Him, and said, "If you are the Messiah, save yourself and us."

But the other thief said to his companion, "Are you not afraid to speak like this? for we have done wickedly and deserve to die; but this man has done nothing wrong."

Then he looked at Jesus and said, "Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

Jesus saw that he was really sorry for all his naughtiness, and so He answered, "To-day you shall be with Me in heaven."

There was a very sorrowful group standing near the Saviour's cross. His mother was there, and three other women who loved Jesus; and John, whom Jesus loved, was there also. The mother of Jesus had come to see her dear Son die; and she was feeling such sorrow for His terrible sufferings, that it was as if a sword was piercing her own heart.

Do you remember how, when Jesus was a little baby, and His mother and Joseph had taken Him to the Temple to present Him to God, good old Simeon had foretold that she would one day feel this bitter pain? That time had now come.

Jesus loved His mother very much, and it made Him sad to know how her poor heart was aching. He thought of her so tenderly; and when He saw her standing there, and the disciple also whom He loved, He said to His mother, "Behold your son!"

Then He said to John, "Behold your mother!"

Jesus meant that John was always to take care of Mary now; and so that same hour John took her to his own home.

CHAPTER LVIII.

THE DEATH OF JESUS.

WHEN the blessed Saviour had been hanging for three long hours on the cross a strange thing happened. Though it was the middle of the day, and the sun was shining brightly, God made a sudden darkness come over all that land.

It was a sign of God's anger towards those who were murdering His Son. For indeed it was an awful thing that had been done: sinful men had dared to nail the King of Glory to a cross of wood!

All the people were frightened at this strange darkness; and their mocking voices became silent. Jesus also never spoke a word, while He was hanging there, so full of pain. When three hours had passed away, it began to get light again, and then Jesus cried out with a loud voice,—

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Ah, during all those dark hours the Saviour had been suffering more than pain of body; His *soul* was troubled. He was suffering as He had done in the

VAIL OF THE TEMPLE RENT.

THE BODY TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS. (293)

garden; and the burden of *our sins* was upon Him. God had not forsaken Him; but Jesus felt as if that dreadful load of sin had made His Father hide His face from Him.

And now He began to feel a burning thirst. His tongue was parched and dry, and He said. "I thirst."

Then one of the soldiers ran and filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it on a stick, and gave it to Jesus. When Jesus had taken it, He said.—

"It is finished!"

And having said this He died.

All His sorrow and pain were ended now! His spirit had gone to God His Father, though His body was still hanging on the cross.

At the moment of His death there was a great earthquake. The earth shook and trembled, and the rocks were split and broken. The wicked people were frightened now, as they had never been before; and many of them when they saw all these things feared greatly, and said,—

"Truly this was the Son of God."

As the evening was coming on, some soldiers were sent to see if Jesus and the two thieves were really dead, because the Jews wanted them to be taken down from the cross before sunset, as the next day was the Sabbath. The soldiers saw that the thieves were still alive, so they broke their legs to kill them quickly.

But when they came to Jesus, they found that He

CARRYING TO THE TOMB. (295)

was quite dead; so they did not break His legs, but one of the soldiers took a sharp spear, and pierced His side, and blood and water came out of His side, and ran down to the ground.

Now there was a rich man, called Joseph, who loved Jesus very much. He had heard Him preach, and as he listened, he made up his mind that he would always try to do the things that would please the Lord. So he was really a disciple of Jesus; but he was afraid to say so, because he knew how angry the Jews would be.

But now that Jesus was dead, he was not afraid any longer to show that he loved Him. He went boldly to Pilate, and asked if he might have the body of Jesus, that he might put it in his own new tomb—or grave—that he had made in his garden.

Pilate said, "Yes, you may take away His body."

Then Joseph went and took the Saviour's body down from the cross. Nicodemus also went with him (you remember he was the ruler who had gone to Jesus by night, to be taught by Him; and *he* was a disciple too). They took with them some fine white linen, and a great quantity of sweet spices; and then they wrapped the body of Jesus in the white linen, with the spices.

When they had done this, they carried Him lovingly and tenderly, and laid Him in the quiet grave.

I must tell you what the grave was like. In Joseph's garden there was a great rock, and in this rock

a very large hole had been made. It was there they laid Jesus gently down, and then they rolled a great stone against the hole, to prevent anything from getting in.

And so the blessed Saviour had willingly given up His life to save a sinful world. But, remember, only those can have "everlasting life" who love and trust in Him. Judas had died that very day, and *he* had not been saved! Two thieves had died that day, but only one is in heaven with Jesus!

What did the Lord mean when He cried, "It is finished?" *What* was finished? His great work of saving sinners; He had borne the curse and the punishment for them, and now His work was done—completely done—done, once and for ever.

CHAPTER LIX.

JESUS RISEN.

THE women who loved Jesus, and who had stood near His cross while He was hanging there in all His agony, never left the place till they had seen their dear Lord's body taken down and laid in the peaceful grave. They watched till the great stone door had been shut, and then they hurried home, with aching hearts, to prepare sweet spices and oint-

(298) THE ENTOMBMENT.

ment, that they might put them on the Saviour's body.

They were obliged to be very quick, for the Sabbath was near, and they must do no work of preparation on that day.

One of these women was called Mary Magdalene; and she loved Jesus with all her heart, for He had done so *much* for her. She had been very miserable and wretched once, tormented by seven devils; and Jesus had cast out the devils, and had given her His own Holy Spirit; and after that, she felt that she could never do enough to show how much she loved Him.

All that Sabbath-day (the day after Jesus had been crucified), the faithful women rested, according to the commandment. Ah, oh, what a sad, sad day it was to them!

But on the morning of the *third* day, very early, while it was yet dark, Mary Magdalene and the other women got up and took with them the sweet ointment they had made, and the spices, and went to Joseph's garden, that they might anoint the body of their dear Master.

As they were walking along, they said, "Who shall roll away for us the great stone from the grave? We cannot do it ourselves—it is too heavy."

But as they came nearer, they found that the stone *was* rolled away! Who could have done it?

They came still closer, and then they saw that the

grave was empty—the body of Jesus was not there. What could have happened?

I will tell you.

The Lord had risen! He was alive again!

There had been a great earthquake, and the angel of the Lord had come down from heaven, and had rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. The angel's face was bright like the light, and his clothes were white as the snow; and for fear of him the soldiers (who were keeping guard in the garden) trembled exceedingly and fell to the ground, as if they were dead.

Do you not remember how Jesus had always told His disciples that He would rise again the third day?

But the women did not know the wonderful thing that had come to pass in Joseph's garden that morning. They only saw that the body of Jesus was not in the grave, and this made them even more sorrowful than they had been before, for they thought that His enemies had stolen it away.

In terrible grief, without waiting a moment, Mary Magdalene ran back, that she might tell the strange sad news to Peter and John.

But now the other women went up quite close to the grave and looked in—and what do you think they saw? Two bright angels were sitting there.

When the women saw them, they were very much frightened, and they fell on their faces; but the angels spoke very gently to them. They said,—

"Do not be afraid; we know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified: but He is risen; He is not here. Look at the place where they laid Him. And now go and tell His disciples, and Peter, that He is risen, and that they shall see Him very soon."

This was the Saviour's own message. How tender and kind of Him to send a special word to poor Peter, who had denied Him, and who had repented and cried so bitterly for his sin!

Trembling and amazed, but full of joy, the women ran from the sepulchre (or grave), to take the glad tidings to the eleven apostles.

But now we must see what had become of Mary Magdalene.

As quickly as she could go, she ran to Peter and John, and told her mournful story: "They have taken away the Lord out of the grave, and we do not know where they have laid Him."

Peter and John listened to her story with great astonishment; then they thought that they must go themselves and try and find out what had really happened. So they both set off running as fast as they could, and Mary Magdalene followed them.

John ran the quickest, so he came first to the grave. He stooped down and looked in—yes! it was quite true!—the body of Jesus was not there. But he saw there the white linen clothes that had been wrapped round the Saviour's body; they were

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neatly folded up; and the napkin that had been round His head was lying in a place by itself.

By this time Peter had come up. He was not satisfied merely to *look* in the grave—he must *go* in. But he only saw what John had seen—it was an empty grave, except for the linen clothes that were lying there.

Afterwards John went into the grave too, and then all at once he remembered how Jesus had indeed said that He would rise again, So now he believed that Jesus *had* risen.

After that, the two disciples went away again to their own home.

But Mary could not bear to leave the place. She stood outside of the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre. And then she saw two angels in white, sitting, one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

The angels said to her, "Why are you crying?"

She was too unhappy to feel frightened, and she answered, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him."

When she had said this, she turned away, and saw Jesus Himself standing near her; but she did not know that it was Jesus.

Jesus said to her, "Why are you crying? For whom are you looking?"

She was crying so much that she did not look up

into His face, or she would have known who it was. She thought that perhaps He was the man who had charge of the garden, and so she said to Him,—

"Sir, if you have taken Him from here, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away."

Jesus said to her, "Mary!"

Ah, *now* she knows who He is! That one word, in that loved voice, she can never mistake! Quickly she turned towards Him now, and said, "O my Master!"

Can you not imagine how her heart was singing with joy, to see her blessed Lord again? Mary Magdalene was the first to whom Jesus showed Himself after He was risen.

Jesus said to her, "Go and tell my brothers that I am going up to my Father and your Father; to my God and your God."

He called His disciples His brothers. Though they had all forsaken Him, He had quite forgiven them.

Jesus showed Himself afterwards to the other women who had gone early to the grave. And when they saw Him, they came and held Him by the feet, and worshipped Him. Then Jesus said to them,—

"Do not be afraid: Go and tell My brothers that they shall see Me soon."

So Mary Magdalene and the other women went and told the disciples, as they mourned and wept,

that they had seen bright angels, and that they had seen the Lord Jesus Himself; and that He had spoken these words to them.

But the disciples did not believe the women, and they did not believe that Jesus was alive. Only John believed. The others thought the women were telling idle, or foolish tales.

CHAPTER LX.

THE WALK TO EMMAUS.

THAT was a joyful, glorious day, when our Lord Jesus Christ rose again from the dead! But after He was risen, He did not live with His disciples as He had done before; He was always with them, and yet they could not always see Him.

He was the same Jesus, and yet there was a difference. He had a human body still, but it was no longer a weak body; it was immortal—that means it could never die. Jesus could never suffer pain again; and He could never feel hungry and thirsty again; but still, He could eat and drink, though He did not require food.

But the love of Jesus was just the same, and it will remain the same to all eternity; nothing could alter that. In His human body, and in His glorious body,

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the heart of Jesus was love—perfect love. And never forget that Jesus is God, and God is Love.

It was the first day of the week—the day that we call Sunday—when Jesus rose from the dead. I told you how He showed Himself to Mary Magdalene, and to the other women, that happy Easter morning; but none of the Apostles had seen Him yet.

To which of them, do you think, He would first show Himself? To John, whom He loved best? and who was the first to believe in His resurrection?

No; it was to Peter—poor sorrowing Peter—the tender Saviour came. The Bible does not tell us what He said to him; but we may be quite sure that He spoke most lovingly to him, and told him his sins were all forgiven.

That same day, two good men were walking to a village called Emmaus, which was about eight miles from Jerusalem. They were disciples of Jesus, but they were not apostles; perhaps they were of the Seventy, whom Jesus had sent out by two and two, before His death, to heal and to teach.

As they were walking along, they were talking of all the things that had happened in Jerusalem the last few days; and they were full of sorrow as they spoke to each other of the cruel death of the Master they loved so much; for they did not believe He was alive again.

While they were talking, Jesus Himself came and

joined them in their walk; but they did not know that it was the Lord. He asked them,—

"What is it you are talking about? for I see you are very sad."

Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered, "Have you not heard of all the dreadful things which have been done in Jerusalem in these days?"

Jesus said to them, "What things?"

And they said, "About Jesus of Nazareth, who was a great prophet, and who did wonderful things, and spoke wonderful words, teaching people about God. But the chief priests and our rulers have crucified Him. We felt so sure that He was the Son of God, the Messiah; but He could not have been, or He would not have been put to death. And another strange thing is, that some women came to us this morning, and said that they have seen some angels, who had told them that Jesus was alive."

Then Jesus said to them "O foolish ones, how slow you are to understand what the Scriptures have told you about the Messiah! It was necessary that the Son of God should die, and afterwards that He should enter into His glory."

Then Jesus went on to teach them all that was in the Bible about Himself; and as He spoke, their hearts glowed with surprise and joy, for they now believed that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, though He had been crucified.

How little they thought that it was Jesus Himself who was speaking to them!

By this time they had come to the house in the village, where the two disciples lived; and Jesus seemed as if He were going on further. But Cleopas and his companion could not bear to part with the kind Stranger, who had made their hearts to burn with joy and hope again; and they begged Him very earnestly not to go away.

"Do stay with us," they said. "It is evening now; so do come in and stay with us to-night."

Then Jesus went into the house with them. After that they got the supper ready, and then they all sat round the table. But what did Jesus do?

Just as in the old days, He took the bread, and blessed it, and brake and gave it to them.

Then they knew Him! They knew that this was indeed their own dear Master! But that moment, as they looked at Him, He disappeared! He had not opened the door, yet He was gone.

Oh, how happy they were to think that they had seen their Lord again with their own eyes! They ate the bread which they had received from His hands; but as soon as they had finished their supper, though it was now night, they hurried back again to Jerusalem, all those long eight miles, that they might tell the Apostles the joyful news, that they had seen the Lord.

CHAPTER LXI.

JESUS SHOWS HIS HANDS, AND FEET, AND SIDE.

IT was the evening of that same happy Easter-day, when the Apostles, with others also who loved the Lord Jesus, were assembled together in a large upper room—perhaps the very room where Jesus had washed their feet, and eaten His last supper with them. The door was kept very carefully locked, because they were afraid of the Jews.

And now two friends had just come in—Cleopas and his companion. But before they could tell their story, the Apostles said to them,—

"The Lord is risen indeed; we believe it now, for Peter has seen Him."

Then Cleopas and the other said, "And we have seen Him too; and we have come back from Emmaus to tell you about it."

So they told the whole story: how the Lord had joined them in their walk—how He had taught them more about the Bible than they had ever known before—and how they did not know it was Jesus, till He had broken the bread. While they were sitting talking together about it, all at once they saw Jesus standing before them. The door was still locked—He had not opened it—yet there He was.

"Peace be to you," He said.

But they were dreadfully frightened, for they could not believe that it was Jesus. Just as when He had walked to them on the water, they thought that He was a spirit.

With the same tenderness as of old, Jesus said to them. "Why are you troubled? and why do you doubt? See My hands and My feet, that it is I; handle Me and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see I have."

And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. Yes; there were the holes, made by the large nails; there could be no doubt of it—it must be Jesus.

The disciples could scarcely believe it, even yet, for joy; it seemed too good to be true. So Jesus said to them,—

"Can you give me something to eat?"

He was not hungry, and He did not require food; but He knew that if He ate before them, they would be satisfied, and would not doubt or fear any longer.

How kind of Jesus!

Then the disciples gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and of a honey-comb. And He took it, and did eat before them.

Then Jesus said to them again, "Peace be unto you: as My Father has sent me, so I send you to teach others."

And He breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Ghost."

He gave them more of His Holy Spirit, to make them more fit for the work He had given them to do.

And so ended that happy, blessed day.

Now Thomas, one of the Eleven, was not with the others that night, when Jesus came; and when the disciples told him that they had seen the Lord, he would not believe it. He answered,—

DOUBT OF THOMAS.

"Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger in the print of the nails, and put my hand into the hole in His side, I will not believe."

He loved Jesus very much; but he had lost all hope of ever seeing his dear Master again. He was very, very sad; and he refused to be comforted.

A whole week had passed away, and the disciples

had not seen the Lord again. But the next Sunday evening, they were again assembled in that upper room, and Thomas with them, when Jesus again stood suddenly before them.

"Peace be to you," He said.

Then He said to Thomas, "Reach hither your finger, and put it into My hands; and reach hither your hand and put it into My side: and do not be faithless, but believe."

And Thomas did not doubt any longer. He knew that it was Jesus; and he knew that Jesus had heard his doubting words, and had seen his unbelieving but loving heart. All unbelief has gone away in a moment; and he calls Jesus (what none of the others have called Him yet) his God. With a glad and thankful joy he exclaimed,—

"My Lord and My God."

Jesus said to him, "Thomas, you believe because you have seen Me: blessed are those who have not seen, and yet have believed."

We have not seen Jesus; but if we believe in Him, and love Him, and trust in Him, that blessing is ours.

CHAPTER LXII.

BY THE LAKE OF GENNESARETH.

ONCE more the Apostles are back again at their old home by the lake of Gennesareth. Why are they there?

Because Jesus had told them to go into Galilee, where He had lived and taught so long, and that He would meet them there. So they went as they were told, and now they were waiting for their Lord to come.

But He did not come immediately; and as they were poor men, and obliged to work for their daily food, they began again their old trade of fishing.

Peter was the first to propose it. He said,—"I am going to fish."

And then the others said, "We will go with you."

So they got ready a boat, and in the evening they set sail; for night is always the best time to catch fish. But all that night they were fishing, without being able to catch anything. How disappointing it was, after working hard for so many hours!

When the morning was come they saw Jesus standing on the shore, close by the water; but they did not know that it was Jesus. He called out to them,—

"Have you caught anything?"

They answered Him, "No."

And He said to them, "Throw out the net on the right side of the boat, and you shall find."

Then they threw out the net as they were told; and now they were not able to draw it up, because there were such a number of great fishes in it. This miracle made them think of another, a long time ago, when just the same thing happened. Ah, that man on the shore was no stranger!

"It is the Lord," John said.

Now when Peter heard that it was the Lord, he was in such a hurry to go to Jesus that He threw himself into the water and swam to the shore. The others followed more slowly in the boat, dragging the net with fishes. And after they had counted them, they found there were a hundred and fifty-three.

As soon as they had come to land they saw a fire of coals there, and some fish laid upon it, and some bread. Who had prepared all this?

It was Jesus; for He knew His poor disciples were cold, and hungry. How kind He always was!

Then He said to them, "Come and dine."

And none of the disciples dared ask Him, "Who are you?" knowing that it was the Lord.

Jesus then came, and took bread, and gave it to them, and fish also. You see He was just the same tender Saviour; He waited on them Himself, and fed them with His own hands.

When they had dined, Jesus said to Peter, "Do you love Me more than the others love Me?"

Peter answered, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you."

Jesus said to him, "Feed My little lambs." That means, Tell little children about Me, and teach them the way to heaven.

Jesus said to him again the second time, "Peter, do you love Me?"

And he answered, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed My sheep." That means, Tell people I have died for them, and urge them to repent of all their sins.

Jesus said to him the third time, "Peter, do you love Me?"

Peter was grieved because Jesus said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" and he answered, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed My beloved sheep."

The Saviour knew quite well that Peter did really love Him; why then did He ask this question so many times?

Because Peter had three times denied his Lord, and had said he did not know Him; so Jesus wished to hear him say three times that He loved Him. Peter was very humble now; he thought little of himself; and his heart was full of love to his blessed Master.

Then Jesus told Peter what was going to happen to him when he was old. He said,—

"When you were young, you were able to go about where you pleased; but when you shall be old, you shall stretch out your hands, and another shall lead you where you do not wish to go."

What did this mean?

Jesus meant that Peter would be crucified. Wicked men would take him and nail him on a cross, because he loved his heavenly Master. We do not know whether Peter quite understood this then; but we do know, that though he had to suffer so much afterwards for his Master's sake, yet he never denied Him again.

CHAPTER LXIII.

THE ASCENSION.

THE beautiful story of our Lord Jesus Christ is almost ended; for the time was drawing very near for Him to go up into heaven. He only remained forty days upon earth after He was risen from the dead; and I have told you almost all that the Bible tells us, of what He did during those days.

No one saw Jesus after His resurrection, except those who loved Him—He would not let Himself be seen by His enemies—but there were a great many who did love Him very much.

You remember Jesus had told His disciples to go into Galilee, and that He would meet them there;

and you have heard how He showed Himself to the Apostles at the Lake of Gennesareth.

After that, the Lord told them to go up into a mountain in Galilee, and that there He would meet all those who knew and loved Him. What a happy meeting that must have been! More than five hundred disciples climbed up the mountain that day, to see the Lord they loved.

Then Jesus came and spoke to them; and when they saw Him, they worshipped Him; but some doubted even yet.

Jesus said to them, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and earth. Go therefore to all nations, and teach them, as I have taught you; for lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world."

And now, once again they are in Jerusalem; for the time has come when Jesus must go away from His loved disciples into heaven. They were in the city, but He led them out, as far as to Bethany.

It was their last walk with Him; and as they went, He told them what they were to do when He was gone. He told them that His Father would soon pour down the Holy Spirit on them; and after that, they were to preach the Gospel everywhere, beginning at Jerusalem—that wicked city where He was crucified.

When Jesus had spoken all these things, He lifted up His hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from

them, and taken up into heaven, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

And while they still looked steadfastly towards heaven, as He went up, behold two angels stood by them, in white garments; and the angels said,—

"Why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, will come again one day from the sky."

Then the disciples returned to Jerusalem again with great joy, praising and blessing God.

This is the story of Jesus! Does it not make you love Him?

Dear children, remember that if you love Him, He is with you always, even now, though you cannot see Him. He loves you. He is gone to heaven to prepare a place for you there.

Never believe that He does not care for you. Satan will often tempt you to think this; but it is not true. Why, He *died* for you!

But perhaps you do not love Jesus. Ah! that is very sad! Yet, if you confess this to Him, and ask Him to make you love Him—to put *His* love in your heart—He will do it. His *promise* is, "Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out."

And, remember, HE IS COMING AGAIN!

We do not know how soon He may come; but whenever it may be, God grant, dear children, that you may be prepared to meet Him, that you may live with Him for ever. Amen.

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